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A Study of William Shenstone and of His Critics

HAZELTINE

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A Study of William Shenstone and of His Critics

with

Fifteen of His Unpublished Poems

and

Five of His Unpublished

Latin Inscriptions

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF WELLESLEY COLLEGE

BY

ALICE I. HAZELTINE

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CONTENTS

PAGE

THE MANUSCRIPT 1

LIFE OF WILLIAM SHENSTONE 5

PERIODS OF INTEREST IN SHENSTONE 7

CRITICAL ESTIMATE 11

1. Introduction 11
2. Character 13
3. Landscape Gardening 29
4. Poetry 33
5. Essays 47
6. Letters 50
7. Literary Criticism 54
8. Conclusion 63

POEMS AND INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE MANUSCRIPT 64

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT 87

BIBLIOGRAPHY 89

CHAPTER I

The Manuscript

The manuscript that has occasioned this thesis is an attractive little gilt-edged book of about fifty pages, written in the hand of the author, William Shenstone, as is evident from comparison with the facsimile letter inserted in the *Works*. It is enriched with many half-page or full-page water-color paintings, which are almost certainly by the same hand, as we know from the *Letters* that Shenstone amused himself with such work (*Works*, III, pp. 150, 155). There are pictures of groves, winding streams and walks, cascades, lakes, summer-houses, the vistas of the blue hills and of the church spire that he liked so well to look upon, and one that probably shows the "ruinated priory." Besides, there are flowers, emblematic pieces such as he often mentions in his letters, the pheasant, the king-fisher or halcyon, which he chose and designed for his coat of arms (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 19)†, a picture of the urn to Thomson, and one of that to Eutrecia Smith. All are done with the same careful, almost affectionate, attention to finish of detail as is his literary work and even his penmanship.

The manuscript contains forty-seven poems and several Latin inscriptions. Of the poems, fifteen have not been published; others, somewhat changed, are in the *Works*. None of his *Levities* or his *Moral Pieces* are among them, nor is the fourth part of the *Pastoral Ballad*. We find the other three parts, however, as well as the *Ode to Memory*, *The Dying Kid*, and *Princess Elizabeth*. The changes in the poems that have been published are chiefly differences in phrasing. Often, perhaps usually, these are improvements; for example, in the stanza:

> The linnets all flock to my groves;
> The limes their rich fragrance bestow;
> And the nightingales warble their loves
> From thickets of roses that blow.

† Thomas Percy and William Shenstone: Ein Briefwechsel etc. See bibliography.

It was changed thus:

> From the plains, from the woodlands and groves
> What strains of wild melody flow!
> How the nightingales warble their loves
> From thickets of roses that blow!
> (*Works*, I, p. 192)

Sometimes, on the other hand, the change, whether made by author or by publisher, was unfortunate. The most marked case is that of the one line faulty in metre in *Hope* of the *Pastoral Ballad* as published:

> But a sweet-briar entwines it around.

In the manuscript it is faultless:

> But a jessamine twines it around.

The fastidious Shenstone would never have rested content with the former, which must have been the choice of his publisher, Dodsley, of less exacting ear for numbers (*Works*, III, p. 340).

There are some changes, also, in titles and in number of stanzas. The poem printed as *Jemmy Dawson* is in the manuscript called *James Dawson's Garland; The Dying Kid* is *The Kid*; the *Pastoral Ballad* is *The Shepherd's Garland.* The inscription to Thomson is unlike that published with the others in Dodsley's *Description of the Leasowes* (*Works*, II), but is like one form suggested by Shenstone in a letter to his friend Graves (*Works*, III, p. 134). The widely admired lines (*Burford Papers*, *English Romanticism of the Eighteenth Century*) inscribed in his grounds to his favorite cousin, Maria Dolman (*Works*, II, p. 356), are here inscribed to Eutrecia Smith. The few poems that have more stanzas in the manuscript I give in full in another section. There are several that have fewer stanzas; for example, the *Ode to Memory;* the poem to Lady Luxborough, *Winter*, 1747; and *Fairy Spell*, which in the manuscript is signed "Oberon." The *Verses* about Thomson written towards the close of the year 1748 have ten additional stanzas.

The Scholar's Relapse has this note at the foot of the page: "Set by Howard and printed vilely in his *British Orpheus.*" *The Rose-bud* has this: "Set by Galliard." Thus we have another ray of light on the musical setting of the songs. Arne's melody for the *Pastoral Ballad* is printed in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands.*

The unpublished poems make no new revelation of the nature or the art of Shenstone, nor do they equal the few best of his already known; but they are of great interest in confirming our opinion of him as man and as poet.

Professor George Herbert Palmer of Harvard University is the present owner of the manuscript. He bought it, with broken binding, from Bernard Quaritch and had it rebound. Quaritch had bought it at a London auction. The date and original owner are made plain by the inscription, in the author's hand, inside the front cover:

Given to Mary Cutler, Jan. 1, 1754
by Will: Shenstone.
In Amore haec insunt omnia. Teren:

Of this Mary Cutler we learn more from D'Israeli, who states on the authority of "the late Mr. Bindley's collection" of anecdotes that there is, on the back of a picture of Shenstone himself, of which Dodsley published a print in 1780, the following inscription written by the poet:

This picture belongs to Mary Cutler, given her by her master, William Shenstone, January 1st, 1754, in acknowledgement of her native genius, her magnanimity, her tenderness, and her fidelity.

W. S.

Thus the same New Year's Day brought her both picture and manuscript. One naturally conjectures that Mary Cutler was his housekeeper, successor of good Mrs. Arnold, and the one who made agreeable the occasional half-hours when he sat in his kitchen, impelled to it in his isolation "by the social passion," as he writes to a friend in the early part of his life at the Leasowes (*Burford Papers*, p. 188). Perhaps, too, she was the servant to whom he left an annuity of thirty pounds. Of the other owners of the little volume we have no positive knowledge, but I have found one or two traces. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of February, 1797, is a note from "D. S. P." giving a Latin inscription to "M. A.," which he says he copied from "a small manuscript book of poems, etc., written by the late Mr. Shenstone of the Leasowes, most of which have never been published." He thinks the lines are certainly intended for the old housekeeper, Mrs. Arnold. This inscription is identical, with the exception of *dilaceratas* for *dilaceras*, with that in our manuscript for "M. A.," and is not in the *Works*. Thus

it seems clear proof of the whereabouts of the manuscript in 1797. Quite possibly, also, the volume was in 1862 in the possession of E. Jesse, who writes under that date, "A kind friend has recently presented to me a box full of unpublished letters and manuscripts and some poems of the poet [Shenstone] which have never seen the light, together with some views of the Leasowes and sketches of the various objects which he placed in it, all drawn by the author's hand" (*Once a Week*, VI). Through what other hands the little book has passed we cannot even conjecture, but it has been well kept. Its fair pages are intact and are fresh, save for a little yellowing due to age and to the paints used, and are a source of pleasure even to one not versed in the lore of manuscripts.

CHAPTER II

Life of William Shenstone

William Shenstone is closely associated with the neat town of Hales-Owen in an outlying part of Shropshire, about seven miles from Birmingham. There he was born (November 13, 1714); there he lived quietly, with only his servants, most of his forty-eight years, writing poetry, essays, letters, and inscriptions, making his native fields a place of beauty for himself and his many guests; there he died quietly (February 11, 1763); and there he is buried near the church with its beautiful spire.

His parents, Thomas Shenstone and Anne Penn, died in his boyhood, and he was left under the kind guardianship of an uncle, Mr. Dolman, rector of Broome. As a child he was hardly contented to go to bed without a book under his pillow as a companion. His educational advantages included the dame-school, the Hales-Owen grammar school, the school for sons of gentlemen and nobles kept by Mr. Crumpton of Solihull, and Pembroke College, Oxford. Of Sarah Lloyd, the "old school-dame" from whom he learned to read, he cherished most pleasant recollections, and he sketched her portrait affectionately in *The Schoolmistress*. At Oxford he spent two happy years, interested and successful in his studies; associating now with the club of jolly young fellows who drank ale, smoked, and sang gay songs the whole evening, now with the set of gentlemen commoners, superior on account of their better liquor (port wine), and now with the flying squadron of plain, sensible, most rational men confined to no club (Graves: *Recollections*, pp. 14-18). He formed a triumvirate of intimate friendship with Graves and Whistler, which was broken only by death. All the time he cherished the idea of taking his degrees and going on to the study of physic. No doubt he surprised himself as well as his friends, when, on going to take possession of the Leasowes and part of the Harborough estate at his majority, he over-stayed the vacation, constantly deferred his return, and, charmed with

the peaceful leisure and beauty of the place, never went back to his university studies. "In this decision," writes Graves, "the happiness of Mr. Shenstone was materially concerned. Whether he determined wisely or not, people of taste and people of worldly prudence will probably be of very different opinions" (*Recollections*, p. 35).

For a few years he made and enjoyed occasional visits to London, to the literary circle at Bath, and elsewhere; but after that he chose to stay on his own little estate, the Leasowes, making visits a few miles distant now and then and one long journey of seventy miles to see his friend Whistler. Ten years before his own death he lost his only near relative, his brother Joseph of Bridgenorth, to whom he was deeply attached. Thus he was left peculiarly alone, as he never married. His last visit was to Lord Stamford at Enville. Soon after his return on a cold Sunday morning, he developed a fever, which proved fatal. Bishop Percy wrote in a letter at that time: "I know not any private gentleman whose loss had occasioned a more sincere or more universal concern. The delicate sensibility of his writings, the consummate elegance of his taste, the beauties of his conversation, and the virtues of his heart had procured him a most extensive acquainance, and every one of these aspired to his friendship" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 92).

CHAPTER III

Periods of Interest in Shenstone

As my bibliography indicates, interest in Shenstone falls into three well-marked periods: the half-century following his death, the middle of the nineteenth century, and the early part of the twentieth. In the first and longest of these periods is felt a certain personal quality in the memory and affection of his intimate friends—Graves, Jago, Dodsley, and Bishop Percy. The year after his death, Dodsley, with well-meaning friendship, but with too little heed to his fastidious friend's wishes, published Shenstone's *Works in Prose and Verse* in two volumes, with "decorations," a life, a description of the Leasowes, and a good-sized diagram of the famous "*ferme ornée.*" To these was added as a third volume five years later, the *Letters to Particular Friends.* Other editions and American reprints followed, whether of the entire works, the poems alone, or the essays. The latter were bound with *The Idler* and other papers in a volume whose rural frontispiece, full-page engravings, and artistic monograms would have delighted the taste of our essayist. They were printed, too, in the good company of Goldsmith's essays. Doctor Johnson both honored and dishonored Shenstone in writing his *Life.* Robert Anderson tried to rectify the unjust sneers of Johnson. Richard Graves, Shenstone's lifelong friend, who outlived him by twenty-five years, wrote his little volume of *Recollections*, which have ever since been an authority, but the book is now very difficult to find. Mason and Jago took delight in paying tribute to him in their blank verse (Mason: *The English Garden;* Jago: *Edgehill*); and many wrote encomiums. Lady Luxborough's cordial letters to Shenstone were published. Alexander Carlyle, in his diverting autobiography, wrote with zest an account of his visit to the Leasowes and their owner. An anonymous poet printed a volume with Shenstone as the almost adored hero of its narrative. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* appeared occasional

notes about him, as well as plates of the Hales-Owen church, showing where he is buried, of the "ruinated castle" at Hagley Park, of which there was a vista at the Leasowes, and of the house in which he was born and in which he spent most of his adult life—the house at which Doctor Johnson and his followers sneer. In the same magazine were printed, too, copies of Lyttleton's inscription to Shenstone "on a neat urn encompassed with stately oaks," and of Graves' inscription to his friend on the urn within the Hales-Owen church.

I must not neglect mention of the memorial stone to Shenstone in the gardens of the Marquis de Girardin at Ermenonville, which the owner called "the Leasowes of France" (*Recollections*, p. 189). At the base of a pyramid in memory of Theocritus, Vergil, and Thomson (*Recollections*, p. 189; *Curiosities of Literature*, III, p. 97) is a slab with this remarkable inscription:

This plain stone
To William Shenstone.
In his verses he displayed
His mind natural;
At Leasowes he layed
Arcadian greens rural.

(Quoted by T. R. H. Sturges in *Notes and Queries*, sixth series, IV, p. 465, from *Reflective Tour through France in 1778*.) This effusion, which might have made Shenstone smile with pleasure at its genuine admiration of what was dearest to him, smile with approval at the effort for simplicity and conciseness in an unmastered tongue, and smile in amusement at the ear-torturing rhyme, was followed by his stanzas to "Venus fresh rising from the foamy tide."

In the second period of interest—the middle of the nineteenth century—the poems and essays were republished. Critical estimates were made with more detachment, but sometimes took a whimsical turn. D'Israeli gives, in his *Curiosities of Literature*, two interesting chapters to Shenstone, and Mr. Tuckerman of Philadelphia has, in his *Characteristics of Literature*, a chapter devoted to Shenstone as the dilettante, in which he holds him up, with some appreciation, it is true, but chiefly to use him as a warning against the folly of being anything less than a great genius. Two or three chapters of Hugh Miller's *First Impressions*

of England and Its People are given to appreciation and description of the Leasowes, William Shenstone, and his works. There is a pleasant and kindly protest made by E. Jesse (*Once a Week*, VI, p. 722) against Johnson's harsh criticism. The author of an unsigned article in *Temple Bar* (X, 397) speaks with discrimination and with a tone of authority, giving a careful review of Shenstone and his work, and assigning to him a decided place as poetic artist and as an essayist of originality and admirable suggestion. In *Notes and Queries* (third series, XII, p. 289) appeared a list of all the successive owners of the Leasowes, with some details of purchase. There too was a short series of letters in regard to Shenstone's verses inscribed on the window of the Red Lion Inn, and a statement that at Harborough Hall are still to be seen in their original position several lines that he wrote in French on a pane of glass (third series, XII, p. 219).

The close of the nineteenth century brings in the third period of interest, which is now more judicious and at the same time more appreciative. Mr. George Saintsbury, in his introduction to the selections from Shenstone in Ward's *English Poets*, commends him frankly for certain unquestionable merits, calling him a "master of the artificial-natural style in poetry" and "a poet somehow," though not a great poet. Ten years later Mr. William H. Hutton writes a genial chapter on the owner of the Leasowes, "one who has, indeed, some claim to be regarded as one of the earliest masters of landscape-gardening," one who "has some of the marks of the true poet, and certainly not a few of the kindly and amiable man." Mr. Beers gives several pages in his *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century* to a discussion of his poetry and his gardening. *The Schoolmistress* was held worthy by Dr. Brandl to be the subject of a doctoral thesis in 1908. Most recent is the publication of Shenstone's correspondence with Bishop Percy, edited by Dr. Hans Hecht of Basel, who sets high value on his critical judgment and work in connection with the *Reliques*. In Professor William Hulme's most readable review of this valuable book (*Modern Language Notes*, XXVII, January, 1912) he takes the opportunity for a refreshing, vigorous, and friendly protest against the long-lived criticisms by Dr. Johnson, Walpole, and Gray, and praises the man, the critic, the letter-writer in no uncer-

tain tone. It is much to be regretted that there is no edition or estimate of Shenstone's essays to be added to this list. They are, it seems to me, a most characteristic and really valuable part of his work. It is disappointing to seek to own a copy, only to find that they are out of print. Something yet remains to be done for Shenstone.

CHAPTER IV

Critical Estimate

Introduction

To be misunderstood and misjudged, and in consequence slighted or scorned, is perhaps a common fate of human beings and especially of minor authors. To render even belated justice in such a case is a pleasant and honorable task. Having ample material for the purpose renders the undertaking doubly pleasant and kindles the hope that it may be effective. The fact that the chief judge in error has been regarded by most of his contemporaries, by many of his successors, and emphatically by himself, as the well-nigh infallible oracle of his age, gives added zest to the work.

William Shenstone has suffered for more than a century from the undue harshness of literary judges. It is to him that I seek to render justice. A great man he was not, nor does he represent a great age; but he is to an unusual degree a representative of the age in which he lived, for he not only reflected all the tendencies of its varied literary life, but also shared in its transitional nature. His was an age of gifted letter-writers,. and his letters are worthy of a place therein. The essay was still in favor, and he wrote essays that should not be forgotten. It had been an age of pastorals, and he wrote pastorals; it was an age of elegies, and he wrote elegies; it was an age of fashionable melancholy, and he had by nature a strain of melancholy, which he did not fail to express; it was an age of satire, and he satirized dry learning and pastoral poetry (*Rape of the Trap*, *Colemira*). Imitations of Spenser were popular among the poets of his day, and Shenstone wrote one of the earliest and the best. He would not endure poverty-stricken limitation to any one metrical form, even the heroic couplet, but, in the newer fashion, tried many. Blank verse, the ballad stanza, quatrains of anapestic trimeter, rhyming couplets of four iambic feet, the irregular ode, the trochaic line, the elegiac stanza, and many more, he used not unskilfully. Didac-

tic poetry was all-powerful and all-popular, and Shenstone was didactic enough for his age in several of his longer poems, although he exclaimed to a friend, "Alas! I do not like formal didactic poetry" (*Works*, III, p. 78). Ballads were beginning to find welcome in literary circles; Shenstone felt the impulse and wrote the ballad of *Jemmy Dawson*. A school of landscape poets was rising; he wrote landscape in his verse; and, with rocks, water, and trees, upon his own hillsides, making them perhaps the best poem he ever wrote. The little common things and events of lowly life were just beginning, in Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, to appear in poetry; to this beginning Shenstone gave a strong impetus in his *Schoolmistress*, leading the way for Goldsmith and Burns. Writers about him were imitating Milton; this Shenstone did not do with his pen, but the Leasowes with its "arched walks of twilight groves," its "waters murmuring," its "close covert by some brook," its "mossy cell," its "bees with honeyed thigh," shows unmistakably the influence of *Il Penseroso*.

Marked changes in literature, as in geology, seldom come suddenly. They come almost unnoticed, and Shenstone is one of the foremost to mark the transition from pseudo-classicism to romanticism, from an adherence to forms that stifled life to an exulting life that surged beyond all forms, from love of nature in the guise of the ancients to love of nature in her own dewy freshness, from professed to practiced simplicity, from being natural according to rule to being natural after one's own heart. He felt and followed not only the influence of French artificiality so long dominant in England, thanks chiefly to Pope, who drew his rules from Boileau; but he felt and followed also the first stirring of the fresher, newer life, which developed slowly indeed, and was to come to full bloom hardly less than a half-century from the time of his death. As a good Augustan, he prized "correctness" highly and was "more correct than Pope himself, particularly in his rhymes" (*Temple Bar*, X, p. 397); he felt the trammels of drawing-room propriety and never expressed deep emotion in his poetry; and he praised nature in the good set terms of the artificial pastoral. As a budding romanticist, however, he criticised Boileau and French influence rather sharply (*Works*, II, p. 175); he objected to Pope's heroic metre with the resulting scantiness and con-

straint (*Works*, I, pp. 8-9), and used it in but one or two of his own poems. His desire for naturalness is shown in as diverse matters as hair-dressing, gardening, and literature. He even persisted, despite all taunts at Oxford, in "wearing his own hair"—and it was not handsome—in those years when every school-boy, as soon as he entered the university, cut off his locks, whatever they were, and put on a wig (*Recollections*, p. 25). Hedges and clipped trees were too artificial for his grounds, where, close to nature, he lived his poetry (*Works*, II, pp. 137, 140). On naturalness in all forms of literature he insisted over and over again, and he showed his appreciation of the natural poetry of the people by encouraging and urging Percy to publish his manuscript of old ballads, albeit with some "correcting."

To estimate Shenstone fairly, we must give him his due, not merely in one or two phases of his work, but in each of the fields where he made his mark—as man, as landscape-gardener, as poet, as essayist, as letter-writer, as literary critic. He has been blamed in all; he has been praised in all; but the critical discussions have been fragmentary or incomplete. One writer has considered only his poetry and his character; another has added a consideration of his landscape work; one has praised his essays only, and held his letters unworthy of notice; another has given all his attention to his work as literary critic as shown in one volume of his correspondence; one has thought only of the poetry; and still another has discussed one poem only. To give a well-rounded appreciation of this versatile man, so likable and so true in everything that he did, is the aim of the present writer.

Character

Shenstone's amiability was praised by all who knew him directly or indirectly. Dodsley, Graves, Bishop Percy, and all his other intimate friends could not say too much of it. Every one liked him and enjoyed the genuine courtesy of his manner; every one who knew him wished to know him better. It is only a whimsical moralist who pauses to lament that amiability is a negative rather than a positive virtue (Tuckerman : chapter on the *Dilettante*). The deeply affectionate nature of the man is felt in almost every letter of his. He clings to Graves, Jago,

Whistler, Percy, with many an expression of heartfelt friendship. His friends were so much to him, present or long absent, that he could not bear the thought of the slightest estrangement or misunderstanding. He was "the warmest and most affectionate friend," says Graves. The depth and strength of his love for his brother Joseph, who is so often and so kindly remembered in the letters of Lady Luxborough, is revealed in his letter telling his loss to Graves—a loss which had a lasting effect upon him.

He cared much, not only for the few intimates, but for the frequent company of other people with congenial tastes, not, as he wrote, "persons of vulgar minds, who will despise you for the want of a good set of chairs, or an uncouth fire shovel, at the same time that they can't taste any excellence in a mind that overlooks these things. . . . Indeed, one loses much of one's acquisitions in virtue in an hour's converse with such a judge of merit by money, etc." (*Burford Papers*, p. 188). His neighbors, Lord Lyttleton and his family, Lord Dudley, Mr. Hylton, and Admiral Smith, and, living at a distance, Joseph Spence and James Thomson, were valued friends; the correspondence with Lady Luxborough, lasting through almost twenty years, was a constant source of pleasure; and after the earlier years at the Leasowes, the place and its owner attracted as many literary guests, gentry, and nobles, from at home and abroad, as he could desire. He passed the last years of his life "in great credit and reputation" (*Recollections*, p. 164). His letters and essays show an easy, thorough understanding of human nature, a widely tolerant spirit, and an ability to read and appreciate not only people of his own type, but also those entirely different. The touching inscription to his little dog, Flirtilla (Manuscript), shows us the tenderness of her master's heart. The satisfying tribute to the memory of M. A. (Manuscript)—without doubt the faithful housekeeper, Mrs. Arnold, who took such good care of her master and was so motherly to his hens (*Works*, III, p. 5)—shows his appreciation of faithful service.

Shy and retiring by nature, he felt an awkward restraint on first meeting strangers, and was often silent; but as soon as this passed, his face lost its heavy look, and his conversation was sprightly, delighting his companions. He was most concise in

his relating of facts, and a skilful teller of stories. We see him, robust rather than elegant of form, dressed in his favorite blue coat and gold-laced scarlet waistcoat (*Recollections*, p. 179), or perhaps in his white suit with silver lace (A. Carlyle: *Autobiography*), telling an amusing anecdote to those about him. He omitted not a circumstance that could heighten the effect and added not a word that could lessen it. His expression was rigidly grave till he reached the point, but then his whole face brightened with such mirth that, like a flash, it seized the whole company (*Recollections*, p. 173). Dearly did he love to tease his friends, but he stopped at once if it began to hurt their feelings, for he could not bear to give pain, even to animals (*Works*, II, p. 279). His love of fun is seen at its height in the joke which, with the help of Percy and one or two others, he played for months upon his neighbor Hylton, who had, Shenstone thought, an undue veneration for antique curiosities (*Percy-Shenstone*, pp. 19, 23, 25, 28, 34, 37). Through a correspondence supposedly with a certain honorable Birmingham dealer in such wares, Mr. Hylton was led to make arrangements for the carving of a valuable cup from the wood of a mulberry-tree planted by Shakespeare. On it was carved Shakespeare himself wearing a gardener's apron and in the act of planting the tree; on another side was the dealer making oath before the Mayor of Stratford that the wood was genuine. Shenstone wrote with glee that he had procured for Hylton "a real King William's bib" and the spoon with which "old Parr ate buttermilk." Percy contributed a remarkable modern-ancient coin, a shell with a hole in it, a small Nemean lion of red clay, and other objects, all with suitably striking descriptions or histories attached. Percy feared that some lasting grudge or dislike of him might result, but Shenstone vowed "by the porringer of old Parr" that no such result should follow. In reality it did not, though when at last the secret came out, Hylton was not quite so much amused as his friend had expected at the excellence of the joke.

To Shenstone's benevolence, never touched on by himself even in his most intimate letters, we have ample witness. Dodsley writes, "His friends, his domestics, his poor neighbors, all daily experienced his benevolent turn of mind. Indeed, this virtue

in him was often carried to such excess that it sometimes bordered upon weakness" (*Works*, I, Preface, p. ii). Alexander Carlyle, on his one visit to the Leasowes, saw the owner turn aside from his distinguished guest to talk for some time with an emaciated young woman in the last stages of consumption. On his return he explained that she was a sickly neighbor, to whom he had given a key to his grounds, as she delighted in them. Graves, in his *Recollections*, says that Shenstone was "never so happy as when he could do any little service to his relations, his friends, or his neighbors, by his advice, his influence, or even his purse, as far as his slender income would permit" (*Recollections*, p. 157). "His will was dictated with equal justice and generosity," and his estate left ample means to pay all his debts, his legacies to his friends, and an annuity of thirty pounds to one servant and of six pounds to another (*Recollections*, pp. 71, 73).

A more pretentious and particularly interesting tribute to this same trait is a poem called *Shenstone: or The Force of Benevolence*, printed anonymously in 1776, and filling a rather thin quarto volume of pleasing press work, with three plates. The author sold it at the Red Lion Inn at the price of two shillings. Its rhyming couplets in the style of Pope are evidently a labor of love, and are dedicated thus: "To those who, amidst affluence, descend to visit the low abodes of the afflicted, and find more felicity in alleviating the wants of their fellow-creatures than in the gaudy pageantry of courts, midnight revelry, and fashionable dissipation." The writer was acquainted with Shenstone. He writes, "The man I celebrate was not a lord, but he was virtuous; his worldly possessions were not mighty, but he had humanity. Unknown to courts, he lived a life recluse in dalliance with his favorite muse. Benevolence was his bosom's chiefest tenant." The story, which we are assured is no fiction, shows "the Leasowes' lord" wandering with his Delia along "the glassy rills" and the "embroidered margin of the limpid lake," hoping for her approval of the seat made in honor of Thomson, and wishing that she herself might be content to dwell "where bashful cowslips rise to kiss her feet." Suddenly an armed rustic attacked him with oaths:

> To Shenstone's head the tube of death was reared.
> The robber trembled (not the good man feared).

Shenstone spoke "with the kindest heart beneath the sky," and learned it was desperate need that had led to this desperate action. He handed out his purse as a gift, said he wished the man no ill, and advised him to hasten away. As he ran far on his way, a trusty servant saw him throw his weapon into the lake and followed him to a miserable hovel in Hales-Owen. There were the starving wife and children. The father poured the gold upon the floor, and confessed with remorse that he had robbed "the kindest of the human race." Colin told his master all that he had seen and heard through a crack in the wall. Shenstone, like a modern philanthropist, made inquiries, and finding that the poor man was really worthy, but hard-pressed, hurried to the hovel, forgave all, and told him to bring his family the next day to live at the Leasowes with "the cherub Peace." There, said he,

> Help me my buildings and my grots to rear;
> Direct my alleys, turn the mellow soil;
> For you, I know, are used to sylvan toil.

Shenstone would keep the secret of the attempted crime.

> Soon to the Leasowes sped the gladsome swain,
> And soon Hygeia decked his infant train.

He worked faithfully for his master till the latter's death, and lived on

> Till the Great Author of Benevolence
> . . . . . .
> Called him, resigned, from this his low abode,
> To join at once his Shenstone and his God.

I am strongly of the opinion, though with no real proof, that the admiring author of this poem is the young journeyman shoemaker, Woodhouse, of whose verses and literary tastes Shenstone wrote to Sherrington Davenport (*Works*, III, p. 394). He gave this man advice and help in his literary pursuits, as he did to Miss Wheatley, to Vernon, and to all others with such tastes whom he could assist (Anderson: *Poets*, IX, p. 588). Graves tells us, moreover, that "his encouragement of the ingenious Woodhouse recommended him to a patroness [Lady Luxborough, very likely] who placed him in a situation where he had leisure to gratify his taste for literary pursuits" (*Recollections*, p. 158). What more natural than that he should satisfy both his taste and his gratitude by praising in verse his helpful patron, of whose kindness in the

neighborhood he must have heard much? Very likely the basis of plot in the poem was the fact, barely stated by Graves, that Shenstone was censured for not insisting on the transportation of a man with five children who had robbed the fish ponds at the Leasowes (*Recollections*, p. 182).

All admit that Shenstone had no vices, but Mr. Gilfillan and others make the charge that he was indolent. Far be it from me to attempt any full denial of the charge. Shenstone recognized this quality in himself, and sometimes lamented that he did not, as his critics say he should have done, take active steps to enlarge his fortune. Yet the literary world has other examples of lack of industry. Coleridge, Cowper, even Wordsworth, were not active, practical men. But Shenstone's output of poetry was not so strangely small as Gray's, and his life was but little longer; his letters are not few; his essays fill a volume of a few hundred pages, entertaining and suggestive, wherever you open it. Moreover, the planning and carrying out, with scanty means, of the transformation of a farm into a paradise is hardly the mere amusement of an idle hour any more than was the transformation, with abundant dollars and workmen, of Back Bay mud-holes into a beautiful drive and park. Indeed, it was far less so, for the first principles of landscape-gardening must then be developed in the same hour. The owner of the estate must often have been workman as well as supervisor. "I make people wonder," he writes, "at my exploits in pulling down walls, hovels, cow-houses" (*Burford Papers*, p. 188). And again, "One piece of water below my priory has confined me, employed my servants, and enslaved my horses all this year" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 41). Perhaps he would have been stronger of body and more constantly in good spirits if he had been more active, yet he gained much by the reposeful quiet of his country life. He avoided in large measure the "becoming unconsciously something like thorns" in anxiety to bear grapes, and the "impoverishment in spirit and temper" of which Pater speaks as possible "in the pursuit of even great ends"; and he had a little share, it may be, in "the intangible perfection of those whose ideal is rather in being than in doing . . . whose manners are in the deepest, as in the simplest, sense, morals" (Pater: *Appreciations*, pp. 60, 61). Lady Luxborough may not

have been far wrong when she responded to his self-condemnation, "You are not the idle man of creation. . . . Your pen, your pencil, your taste, and your sincere, cheerful conduct in life (which are the things that make you appear idle) give such an example as it were to be wished might be more generally followed—few have the capacity, fewer have the honesty to spend their time so usefully as well as unblamably" (*Lady Luxborough: Letters*, p. 106).

As householder, Shenstone has been judged almost exclusively by Dr. Johnson's emphatic words:

"His house was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was for his grounds. When he came home from his walks, he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof; but he could spare no money for its reparation. In time his expenses brought clamors about him that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's song; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fauns and fairies. He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties" (Johnson: *Works*, III, p. 352). This harshness is hardly lessened by the addition that a pension "could not have been ever more properly bestowed" than on this man.

The whole matter would be scarcely worth attention, if the dictator's word had not been so loudly and positively spoken, so universally believed, so emphatically echoed, and so often used through following generations as a reproach against unoffending Shenstone and as a starting-point for further censure. One is tempted to ask why, if the owner found pleasure in embellishing his grounds at the sacrifice of his house, he had not a perfect right to do as he pleased. He had no family dependent on him, and none but distant and uncongenial relatives—manufacturers of buttons—to whom to leave his property. But Johnson is without doubt far from the facts. Shenstone's letters tell several times of papering and of other changes in the house, of paintings and busts for it, of careful and comfortable arrangements of furniture (*Works*, III, pp. 158, 159, 224, 233, 235, 327). The picture of the house in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1811 (vol. 87, part 2, p. 505), made from a drawing done by Shenstone in 1744, before any of his changes had been made, shows a comfortable house with two gables, a cupola, and three chimneys. "This house," says

Parkes, "by considerable additions and alterations, aided by the ingenuity and taste of Shenstone, was rendered a very respectable dwelling and remained till 1775." Some particulars of this exercise of taste and ingenuity we learn from the two friends of Shenstone, Richard Graves and Bishop Percy. They with their wives had visited the Leasowes more than once for at least a few days at a time, but Johnson had never done so. In regard to the possibility, Percy writes to Shenstone, "He even talks of taking a journey down to the Leasowes, but this you must not much depend on; he is no more formed for long journeys than a tortoise" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 55).

Mr. Graves, good parish priest, asserts that the house was by no means so much neglected "as Doctor Johnson's *intelligence* seems to imply," and expresses the conviction that the facetious intimation of his groves being haunted by duns is a groundless surmise. "Mr. Shenstone was too much respected in the neighborhood to be treated with rudeness. . . . He gave his hall some air of magnificence by sinking the floor, and giving it an altitude of ten feet instead of seven. By his own good taste and his mechanical skill he acquired two tolerably elegant rooms from a mere farm-house" (*Recollections*, pp. 71-73). To Anderson Bishop Percy wrote:

"Johnson had committed great mistakes with respect to Shenstone. . . . He grossly misrepresented both his circumstances and his house, which was small but elegant, and displayed a great deal of taste in the alterations and accommodation of the apartments, etc. On his sideboard he had a neat marble cistern, which, by turning a cock, was fed with living water; and he had many other little elegant contrivances, which displayed his genius and made me regret that this little elegant Temple of the Muses was pulled down for the larger building of Mr. Horne. . . In the value of purchase how much Mr. Shenstone's estate was improved by his taste will be judged from the price it fetched when sold at auction in 1795, being seventeen thousand pounds sterling, though when it descended to him, it was only valued at three hundred pounds a year" (*Nichols: Illustrations of Literature*, VII, pp. 151-152).

Moreover, Shenstone was in the habit of entertaining guests of distinction not infrequently. One day he casually mentions

three guests with five servants (*Works*, III, p. 226, 227); again, five guests at tea (pp. 184-185); yet again, ten dinner guests with six footmen (p. 171). Did he invite these guests, many of them nobles, to sit at his table under a leaky roof through which the ready English rain might come at any moment and drench table, floor, and feet? Lady Luxborough used to visit the Leasowes often, planned to do so annually. She brought friends and servants with her and stayed over night (*Lady Luxborough: Letters*, pp. 5, 260, 308, 393, 414). There she met Lord Dudley, his sister, and others whom she called "extremely agreeable" (*Lady Luxborough: Letters*, p. 51). There at another time she and Lord Dudley feasted on one of Shenstone's own fowls, which, she declares, "must have been a phoenix. How could we have been both so elegantly feasted by any common bird?" (p. 69) This courteous and friendly lady was hardly lodged in a mean, shabby, neglected house, only half protected from cold and storm. We must understand Shenstone's expressions concerning the humbleness of his abode as we do those of this gentle lady when she calls her mansion at Barrells her "cell," and her estate, which she had "fitted up in elegant style," her *ferme négligée* (*Recollections*, p. 114; *Lady Luxborough: Letters*, p. 37).

The estate was not exhausted by its adornments, as is plain from the statements of Mr. Graves:

"Though his works (frugally as they were managed) added to his manner of living, must necessarily have made him exceed his income, and of course he might sometimes be distressed for money, yet he had too much spirit to expose himself to insults for trifling sums, and guarded against any greater distress by anticipating a few hundreds, which his estate could very well bear, as appeared by what remained to his executors after the payment of his debts and his legacies" (*Recollections*, pp. 71-72).

There is, then, not the slightest foundation in fact for these sneers of Johnson. The truth of the matter seems to be that his injustice is due half to his ignorance of facts, his domineering spirit, and a certain ingrained jealousy, and half to the dulness of his weighty mind in perceiving humor. Plainly he took in all seriousness the verses on *The Poet and the Dun;* the lines found in *The Progress of Taste*:

When all the structure shone complete,
Not much convenient, wondrous neat,
. . . . . .
Ah me! ('twas Damon's own confession)
Came Poverty and took possession;

and the description, which Shenstone himself calls a humorous addition to his poem, *Economy*, a rhapsody addressed to young poets, and perhaps written at Lady Luxborough's request that he should give her some rules on economy (letter of Lady Luxborough quoted in *Shenstone: or The Force of Benevolence*, note, p. 12). In this postscript—part third of Shenstone's poem—we read of

The poet's roofs, the careless poet's, his
Who scorns advice;

of his room decked with fluttering spider-webs,

Cell ever squalid, where the sneerful maid
Will not fatigue her hand, broom never comes;

of the walls

in fady texture clad,
Where wandering snails in many a slimy path,
Free, unrestrained, their various journeys crawl;

of the poet's chair with "fractured seat infirm" and "aged cushion" full of dust. Johnson at once jumps clumsily to the conclusion that all this is true of the bard of the Leasowes, and forthwith issues his dictum holding the unthrift poet up to ridicule. Truly, humor to be read by Johnson should be carefully and plainly labeled!

The supercilious or over-serious fault-finder has sometimes blamed the transformer of the Leasowes for vanity in hearing his place praised. Walpole's superficial criticism in this connection has been longer-lived and more influential than it deserves, as much of the world listened eagerly to "the pleasant Horace." Of Shenstone he writes:

"Poor man! he wanted to have all the world talk of him for the pretty place he had made, which he seems to have made only that it might be talked of. The first time a company came to see my house I felt his joy. I am now so tired of it that I shudder when the bell rings at the gate. It is as bad as keeping an inn, and I am often tempted to deny its being shown" (Walpole: *Works*, V, p. 169).

One can hardly help suspecting a little jealousy, and detecting more insincerity, in this light superciliousness of the owner of "a house full of playthings," of which he said he was as "fond as any bishop is of his bishopric." This simple house had "thirty-two windows enriched with painted glass." While Walpole was lavishing much of his large fortune thus, Shenstone was making his home in the pasture-lands beautiful and famous with only three hundred a year and his own affectionate supervision. Well might the man of wealth envy his skill. As to the pleasure of having Strawberry Hill admired, one friend, at least, understood that it was a pleasure by no means worn out to the owner, however much he might wish it to appear so. Having complained to his keen-sighted friend, Madame du Deffand, of the intrusions on his privacy, he received the ready reply, "Oh! vous n'êtes point fâché qu' on vienne voir votre château; vous ne l'avez pas fait singulier; vous ne l'avez rempli de choses précieuses, de raretés . . . pour y rester seul ou ne recevoir que vos amis" (Walpole: *Letters*, edited by Cunningham, V, p. 169, note). This was not the only time Walpole had expressed a modesty and humility that were only outward. As Shenstone remarks, "A man sooner finds out his own foibles in another than any other foibles" (*Works*, II, p. 227).

A marked trait of Shenstone, which seems his by instinct as well as by cultivation, and which casts its charm over everything he did, is his love of a sequestered life and his unfailing delight in woods, waters, and all things rural. He called himself "a rural enthusiast" (*Once a Week*, VI). Yet the genuineness of this feeling has been more than questioned by the poet Gray in words quoted and believed by nearly every following writer on Shenstone:

"I have read an octavo volume of Shenstone's letters; poor man! he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned, but which he only enjoyed when people of note came to see him and commend it" (Gray: *Works*, edited by Gosse, III, p. 344).

This remark is quoted with as much patronizing satisfaction as Johnson's saying about the broken-roofed house; and it seems to me equally unfounded. That oft-echoed phrase, "Poor man!"

has labeled Shenstone as an object of pity. What is Gray's authority for saying that he lived "against his will in retirement"? Gray, the sensitive, with his own love of retirement, should have understood better. How did he fail to perceive in another a real love of rural life, appearing almost constantly in Shenstone's poetry and so often in his letters, when he himself felt thus:

"Happy they that can create a rose-tree, or erect a honeysuckle, that can watch the brood of a hen, or see a fleet of their own ducklings launch into the water. It is with a sentiment of envy I speak of it" (Gray: *Letters*, edited by Rideout, p. 131).

He found in Shenstone's letters occasional wishes for money, to be sure, but no sordid wishes for it. Indeed, Shenstone had the independence to decline an offer of two hundred pounds, delicately made by William Pitt, for improvements about the Leasowes that the owner could not afford to make (*Recollections*, pp. 82–83). In the letters he wrote, "If I wish for a large fortune, it is rather for the sake of my friends than myself. . . . It is to gratify myself in the company and in the gratifications of my friends" (*Works*, III, p. 19).

"Alas, that I cannot spare money to drain and to improve my lands" (p. 292).

"If I had three hundred pounds to lay out about the Leasowes, I could bring my ambition to peaceable terms" (p. 85).

There is a note of dissatisfaction, it is true, in the words, "I have often thought, myself, that were a person to live at the Leasowes of more merit than myself and a few degrees more worldly prudence, he could scarce want opportunities to procure his own advancement" (p. 166). And there are some natural expressions of ungratified desire for recognition and advancement, such as the following, which is half in play:—"Every one gets posts, preferments, but myself. Nothing but my ambition can set me on a footing with them and make me easy. Come then, lordly pride" (p. 82). But there are frequent emphatic expressions of love for the quiet of his home, love for the home itself. Here are a few of them:

"I never leave home but with reluctance. I really *love* no PLACE so well; and it is a great favor in me to allow any one a week of my summer" (p. 251).

After a visit to Lord Ward, Lord Gray, and the Worcester Music-meeting: "Very many of the noblesse, whom I had seen at the Leasowes, were as complaisant to me as possible; whereas it was my former fate in public places to be as little regarded as a journeyman shoemaker. . . . On the whole, I was not a little pleased that I had made this excursion, and returned with double relish to the *enjoyment* of my *farm*" (p. 319).

"Very happy do I think myself, when, after a continual succession of company, visits paid, and excursions taken, I can sit down in peace and quietness, to attend to the business of correspondence and friendship" (p. 368).

"I look upon my scheme of embellishing my farm as the only lucky one I ever pursued in my life" (p. 268).

"I have three or four more of these superb visits to make and which I may not omit without giving real offense. To Lord Plymouth next week; Lord Stamford's the week after; then, to Lord Lyttleton at our Admiral's; and then to Lord Foley" (p. 341).

A man who writes thus is plainly in retirement not against his will, but in accordance with his will and with his tastes. "After a certain time of life," writes Graves, "I do not think that any consideration would have bribed him to live away from the Leasowes" (*Recollections*, p. 136). But perhaps Gray had in mind also, two passages which have led some biographers to look upon Shenstone as a man disappointed in life and throughout life, to say, as does Hugh Miller, with the inevitable echo of Gray, "Poor Shenstone! Never, as we may see from his letters, was there a man who enjoyed life less" (*First Impressions of England and Its People*, p. 155). Now there are only two passages, I believe, which can possibly be so construed, even when taken out of their context and balanced by none of the passages of contentment. The first was written 1741, only a year or two after he had come into possession of the Leasowes:

"Every little uneasiness is sufficient to introduce my whole train of melancholy considerations, and to make me utterly dissatisfied with the life I now lead and the life which I foresee I shall lead. I am angry, and envious, and dejected, and frantic, and disregard all present things, just as becomes a madman to do.

I am infinitely pleased (though it is a gloomy joy) with the application of Dr. Swift's complaint, 'that he is forced to die in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole.' My soul is no more suited to the figure I make than a cable rope to a cambric needle: I cannot bear to see the advantages alienated which I think I could deserve and relish so much more than those that have them. Nothing can give me patience but the soothing sympathy of a friend, and that will only turn my rage into simple melancholy. I believe soon I shall bear to see nobody. I *do* hate all hereabouts already, except one or two. I will have my dinner brought upon my table in my absence, and the plates fetched away in my absence; and nobody shall see me; for I can never bear to appear in the same stupid mediocrity for years together, and gain no ground . . . Not that all I say here will signify to *you*; I am only under a fit of dissatisfaction, and to grumble does me good—only excuse me, that I cure myself at your expense" (*Works*, III, pp. 44-45).

Hugh Miller ends his quotation with Swift's words and seriously calls the whole "a frightful confession" (*First Impressions*, p. 156). He pays no heed to the playful close, which shows that the whole is only a fit of dissatisfaction, and that the dissatisfied man is curing himself by pouring out the passing feeling to his trusted and understanding friend. Are the persons who have had like hours of discontent with everything in life so few that such feelings should call forth special notice? Are they all unhappy and disappointed men? How many, then, are the ordinarily happy men? And does a man *say* that he is "angry, and envious, and dejected, and frantic" when he is so in truth, when the feelings are deeper than the surface? Mr. Mumby, quoting this letter in his collection, has the common sense to entitle it "A Good Grumble." He quotes, too, another letter of Shenstone, that in which he writes, "I find no small delight in rearing all sorts of poultry. . . . As I said before, one may easily habituate one's self to cheap amusements; that is, rural ones (for all town amusements are horridly expensive); I would have you cultivate your garden, plant flowers . . . write now and then a song, buy now and then a book, write now and then a letter" (*Works*, III, p. 160).

That he was thoroughly discontented it is impossible to believe when we read this and other passages. He wrote:

"You cannot think how much you gratified my vanity when you were here by saying that if this place were yours, you thought you should be less able to keep within the bounds of economy than myself. God knows it is pain and grief to me to observe her rules at *all;* and *rigidly* I never can. How is it possible to possess improvable scenes, and not wish to improve them? And how is it possible, with economy, to be at the expense of improving them upon my fortune? To be continually in fear of excess in perfecting every trifling design, how irksome! to be restrained from attempting any, how vexatious! So that I never can enjoy my situation, that is certain. Economy, that invidious old matron! on occasion of every frivolous expense makes such a hellish squalling that the murmur of a cascade is utterly lost to me" (p. 192).

But this is not overwhelmingly serious, and he wrote also, "I almost hate the *idea* of wealthiness as much as the *word.* It seems to me to carry a notion of fulness, stagnation, and insignificancy" (p. 137). To be sure, he wrote in 1741, "Probably enough I shall never meet with a larger share of happiness than I feel at present. If not, I am thoroughly convinced my pain is greatly superior to my pleasure." But he added in a moment, "I do not know how I am launched out so far into this complaint; it is perhaps a strain of constitutional whining. . . . I will be as happy as my fortune will permit, and will make others so . . . I will be so" (pp. 59–60).

He distresses his biographers by writing to Mr. Graves in 1746:

"I have lost my road to happiness, I confess; and, instead of pursuing the way to the fine lawns and venerable oaks which distinguish the region of it, I am got into the pitiful parterre-garden of amusement, and view the nobler scenes at a distance. I think I can see the road, too, that leads the better way, and can show it to others; but I have many miles to measure back before I can get into it myself, and no kind of resolution to take a single step" (pp. 161–162).

But when, as often, he was in ill health, he wrote as follows:

"I am in as good spirits this instant as ever I was in my life; only 'Mens turbidum laetatur.' My head is a little confused; but I often think seriously that I ought to have the most ardent

and practical gratitude (as the Methodists choose to express themselves) for the advantages that I have; which, though not eminently shining, are such, to speak the truth, as suit my particular humor, and therefore deserve all kind of acknowledgment. If a poet should address himself to God Almighty with the most earnest thanks for his goodness in allotting him an estate that was overrun with shrubs, thickets, and coppices, variegated with barren rocks and precipices, or floated three parts in four with lakes and marshes, rather than such an equal and fertile spot as 'the sons of men' delight in, to my apprehension he would be guilty of no absurdity. But of this I have composed a kind of prayer, and intend to write a little speculation on the subject. This kind of gratitude I assuredly ought to have and have" (p. 91).

In his essays he pens these well-weighed lines:

"We are oftentimes in suspense betwixt the choice of different pursuits. We choose one at last doubtingly and with an unconquered hankering after the other. We find the scheme which we have chosen answers our expectations but indifferently—most worldly projects will. We therefore repent of our choice, and immediately fancy happiness in the paths which we decline; and this heightens our uneasiness. We might at least escape the aggravation of it. It is not improbable we had been more unhappy, but extremely probable we had not been less so, had we made a different decision" (*Works*, II, p. 245). The essayist here touches on an experience common to many, if not all, human beings.

"I am miserable," he wrote comfortably in 1745, "conscious to myself that I am too little selfish; that I ought now or never to aim at some addition to my fortune; and that I make large advances towards the common catastrophe of *better* poets, poverty" (*Works*, III, p. 120). But he was not miserable enough over his lack of riches to set about increasing his fortune in a business-like way. Instead he went on, "I never can attend enough to some twelve-penny matter, on which a great deal depends." Possibly he longed for a wife's companionship (p. 115), but the following words of his hardly indicate it: "I have often thought those to be the most enviable people whom one least envies—I believe married men are the happiest that are; but I cannot say I envy them" (p. 64). Of his friendship, or love

affair, with the Miss C. of the *Pastoral Ballad*, with whom some of his biographers would have him deeply in love, he said to Graves, "My amour, in so far as I indulge it, gives me some pleasure, and no pain in the world" (p. 120). And he assured Graves, "Marriage was not once the subject of our conversation, nor even love" (*Recollections*, p. 106).

The real state of the case seems to be—and in this he is truly the child of his time and of his Anglo-Saxon ancestors—Shenstone had in his poetry, his letters, and his own nature a vein of pensiveness and not uncomfortable melancholy, which it was the literary custom of those days to express. We find it in Parnell, Young, Gray, Akenside, Thomson. It had been more deeply voiced centuries earlier in the oldest English lyrics. And Shenstone seems really to enjoy indulging himself in the expression of this "pleasing melancholy." It is perhaps inseparable from a rich vein of humor such as his, a gentle playfulness, which, though it grew less after the death of his loved brother, did not desert him even in such loneliness. Those who often smile from the heart, sigh from the heart as well. Shenstone was "fearful of whining" (*Works*, III, p. 99). He valued "universal cheerfulness" and called it "worth all that either fortune or nature can bestow" (pp. 241, 242). He could smile, too, at his own sighing, and how that throws light on character! "Thus," he writes in 1743, "my epistles persevere in the plaintive style; and I question whether the sight of them does not, ere now, give you the vapors. I have an old aunt who visits me sometimes, whose conversation is the perfect counterpart of them. She shall fetch a long-winded sigh with Dr. Young for a wager; though I see his Suspiria are not yet finished. He has relapsed into *Night the Fifth*" (p. 107).

Landscape Gardening

As a landscape gardener, Shenstone's influence was widespread and has proved lasting. It is, I believe, in accordance with the best practice of our own day. He was among the first to grasp the ideas of freedom, openness, the "triumphs of the waving line," and the following of nature's own suggestions. Furthermore, he was among the first to put these principles into practice at once; and, though lavish by nature, he developed, perhaps perforce,

the talent of demonstrating great principles and achieving really remarkable artistic results with small means. When nature with her springing step is the guide, when teaching and practice go hand in hand, and when the master, seeing that the work of his brain and hand is good, shows it himself with ready courtesy and something of a creator's satisfaction to all who seek him,—then indeed we expect and find an effective influence.

The very name of Shenstone's estate, the Leasowes (an archaic word for pastures), has a quaint charm. His *ferme ornée*, as he often called the "paradise," which month by month and year by year he made from the one hundred and fifty acres of thickets, swamps, fields, and woodlands left him by his father, became a model for people far and near, bringing many a delightful and delighted guest to his door, and teaching a gracious art, in which we are trying now to instruct our young men and maidens.

We may note in passing the words of Doctor Johnson on this part of Shenstone's work, words that have been quoted with far too great respect:

"Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make the water run where it will be heard, and stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden, demands any great powers of mind I will not inquire; perhaps a surly and sullen spectator may think such performances the sport rather than the business of human reason" (Johnson: *Works*, III, p. 350). What better appreciation could we expect from a man to whom one mountain looked like the others, and all were mere protuberances on the surface of the earth? What he said of Shenstone was true of himself: "He had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated." Yet he admits that such gardening is "an innocent amusement," and that "some praise must be allowed by the most supercilious observer to him who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well."

Shenstone wrote no elaborate or finished treatise on the subject, but his *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening* enunciate broader principles and are more practicable, far more widely available,

than Bacon's famous directions for the conventional garden of a prince, with all its sumptuousness. Such sayings as these come from the pen of the artist of the Leasowes:

"Ground should first be considered with an eye to its peculiar character; whether it be the grand, the savage, the sprightly, the melancholy, the horrid, or the beautiful. As one or other of these characters prevail, one may somewhat strengthen its effect" (*Works*, II, p. 127).

"Even the temper of the proprietor should not perhaps be wholly disregarded; for certain complexions of soul will prefer an orange tree or a myrtle to an oak or a cedar" (p. 138).

"In designing a house and gardens, it is happy when there is an opportunity of maintaining a subordination of parts; the house so luckily placed as to exhibit the whole design" (p. 128).

"The landscape painter is the gardener's best designer" (p. 129).

"When a building or other object has once been viewed from its proper point, the foot should never travel to it by the same path which the eye has traveled over before. Lose the object, and draw nigh obliquely" (p. 131).

"The eye should always look rather down upon water; customary nature makes this requisite" (p. 130).

"Water should ever appear as an irregular lake or a winding stream" (p. 141).

"Apparent art in its proper province is almost as important as apparent nature. They contrast agreeably, but their provinces should ever be kept distinct" (p. 135).

"The shape of ground, the site of trees, and the fall of water are nature's province. Whatever thwarts her is treason" (p. 136).

"Art, indeed, is often requisite to collect and epitomize the beauties of nature, but should never be allowed to set her mark upon them" (p. 142).

Shenstone's use of urns and small obelisks and of inscriptions dedicating seats or summer-houses, was a passing fancy of the age, but such maxims are lasting.

His advice was sought by many landed proprietors in beautifying their estates. His ideas were quoted with respect and were adopted or developed by other writers on the same subject—by

Wheatley in his treatise on *Modern Gardening*, by Mason in his long didactic poem, *The English Garden*, by the Marquis of Ermenonville in his treatise on *The Means of improving the Country round our Habitations* (*Recollections*, p. 64), by Pindemonte, who traced the taste of English gardening to Shenstone (*Curiosities of Literature*, p. 97). A set of his works is kept in the landscape gardening department of the Boston Public Library. The Leasowes inspired Abbotsford. Scott writes in one of his prefaces, "I can trace even to childhood a pleasure derived from Dodsley's account of Shenstone's Leasowes; and I envied the poet much more for the pleasure of accomplishing the objects detailed in his friend's sketch of his grounds than for the possession of pipe, crook, flock, and Phillis to boot" (Quoted in Miller: *First Impressions*, p. 121).

In this connection it is worth while to notice the short essay introducing the selections from Shenstone in Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature* (vol. 23, pp. 13305–7). The writer, whose name is not given, derives most of his material, in addition to the inevitable quotations from Johnson and Gray, from Tuckerman's chapter on the *Dilettante*, and derives it, with no acknowledgment, by the path of bungling plagiarism. His only originality lies in his inaccuracy, his attempted humor, and a vexatious assumption of doing justice, while he is in reality most unjust. The opening sentence shows the method of using material. Tuckerman begins:

"A friend of mind recently purchased at auction an old copy of Shenstone. It is illustrated with a portrait and frontispiece representing some kind of aquatic bird peering up from among the reeds by the side of a little waterfall."

The later writer begins thus:

"Turning over the pages of a certain eighteenth-century annual, the reader comes upon a brown and yellow engraving of a landscape garden: of walks in undulating curves, miniature lakes, little white cascades, Greek temples, pines and cypresses cut in grotesque shapes. Aquatic birds peer from out the reeds, and doves flutter in the trees."

Now the "brown and yellow engraving" does not show nearly all the objects seen there by this ready writer. No pine or cypress is there, and all the trees have their natural grace of form, as might

be expected from the pains Shenstone took with this picture of his grove. Not a tree cut in a grotesque shape is there or was ever on Shenstone's grounds. That is an artificial practice against which he specifically protests. "Why fantastically endeavor," he exclaims, "to humanize those vegetables of which nature, discreet nature, thought it proper to make trees?" (*Works*, II, p. 149). Surely it is unwise to write a critical estimate of an author with an important part of whose works the writer is wholly unacquainted.

The beauty of the Leasowes, even though perishing from the neglect or destructive bad taste of following inartistic owners, attracted such visitors as Goldsmith, Hugh Miller, and Wordsworth. Even as lately as 1905, Mr. W. H. Hutton of Oxford found great interest in visiting the spot, although only a few groups of Shenstone's groves and "hanging woods" of firs, elms, or beeches remained. Neglected and overgrown as they are, says this twentieth-century guest, the acres of the Leasowes show "as do few other places in England, how in the beginnings of the art, the principles of landscape gardening were developed" (*Burford Papers*, p. 186).

Poetry

It is hard to separate Shenstone's character, his gardening, and his poetry, for each one is an essential part of the others. The qualities of his poetry as a whole that most impress the careful reader are simplicity; fastidiousness of ear; refinement of taste; variety of poetic form; ingrained love of country life and of all the beauties of nature about him save those of winter; a profound admiration for the unostentatious private virtues, which are the foundation of all healthy life, whether individual or national, as opposed to ambition for court favor and glaring fame; and, despite much lifelessness of conventional phrasing, sincerity of feeling "in an age when feeling was none too common" (Ward: *The English Poets*, p. 272). Take away the stereotyped pastoral phrasing from Shenstone's poetry, and a large part of his artificiality disappears; take away still other fetters of convention, and the real feeling still remains. He does not stir our hearts deeply, but he does touch them in reality. At his best we find also, as in the *Pastoral Ballad*, great delicacy of artistic perception and touch;

or, as in *The Schoolmistress*, an easy picturesqueness, a warm sympathy in characterization, and a gentle humor, which recall in some measure the master-artist Chaucer.

Certain supercilious words concerning our poet challenge our attention. They have so long been credited to Gray and quoted as his that, although it now seems probable from my investigations that they were really a forgery of his friend Mason's, they should be discussed here.

"There is Mr. Shenstone, who trusts to nature and simple sentiment; Why does he do no better? He goes hopping along his own gravel walks, and never deviates from the beaten paths for fear of being lost"[1] (Gray: *Poems*, with memoirs of his life and writings by Mason, p. 261). "This remark," says Anderson, "was made in connection with Shenstone's pieces in the last two volumes of Dodsley's *Collection*" (*Poets of Great Britain*, IX, p. 261). It is only fair to note that his poems in these two volumes were published while he lay ill of a fever, and that Dodsley's friendly intentions were better than his judgment. "I had been mortified," writes Shenstone, "by the first sight of what was done. To speak the truth, there are many things appear there contrary to my intentions; but which I am more desirous may be attributed to the unseasonableness of my fever than to my friend D——'s precipitation. . . . The verses in the sixth volume (which was printed before the fifth) were printed without my knowledge; and when I sent up an improved copy, it arrived a good deal too

[1] In Mason's edition of Gray (1775) these sentences appear in a letter (Letter 30) from Gray to Dr. Wharton dated from Cambridge, March 8, 1758. No such letter is printed in Gosse's edition (1885) or even in that of Mitford (1816). Gosse writes as follows of Mason's methods:—

"He did not know what it was to be scrupulous in approaching a patron or in handling a text. With him the end justified the means, and he thought no more of confuting a rascally enemy by introducing a forged paragraph into a letter than he did of completing an unfinished stanza or of suppressing a clumsy sentence. His version of Gray's *Letters* is crowded with alterations, interpolations, and transpositions. . . . I have compared Mason's text again and again with Gray's actual holograph, and have experienced a sort of amazement at the impudence that the collation reveals. . . . I have ventured to expunge these and other forgeries altogether, when it is quite certain that they were introduced by Mason, and I have not cared to disturb the reader by any current reference to them" (Gray: *Works*, edited by Gosse, pp. xi-xii).

late. . . . As things happen, I am made to own several things of inferior merit to those which I do not own. All this is against me; but my thoughts are avocated from this edition and wholly fixed upon a future, wherein I hope Dodsley may be prevailed upon to omit some things also from other hands which discredit his collection" (*Works*, III, pp. 313-314).

True, there is only a little originality and much that is conventional in the poems here considered; but the emotions are real and natural, the love of nature is unmistakable, and there are many passages whose poetic perception of the beauty in common country things and whose flowing melody have still an almost haunting charm. Mr. W. H. Hutton admires, as many have done and still do, "that sensitive, delicate touch" in *Hope* of the *Pastoral Ballad*, and quotes the stanza:

My banks they are furnished with bees,
Whose murmur invites one to sleep;
My grottos are shaded with trees,
And my hills are white over with sheep.
I seldom have met with a loss,
Such health do my fountains bestow,
My fountains all bordered with moss,
Where the harebells and violets grow.

"It sounds easy enough," he adds, "but really the tunefulness of it is inimitable" (*Burford Papers*, pp. 182-183).

Mr. Saintsbury says that these same lines "and a few other such things obstinately recur to the memory and assert that their author was after all a poet. . . . In the Spenserian stanza he is commendable. . . . His anapests are much more original. . . . Shenstone taught this metre [anapestic trimeter] to a greater poet than himself, Cowper, and these two between them have written almost everything worth reading in it, if we put avowed parody and burlesque out of the question" (Ward: *The English Poets*, p. 272).

Feeling in *The Dying Kid* and *Ode to Memory* is tender and true, despite artificial expression. At least one passage has vivid picturesqueness of detail, as the poet, tired of ambitious years, exclaims:

Oh, from my breast that season rase,
And bring my childhood in its place;
Bring me the bells, the rattle bring,
And bring the hobby I bestrode,

When pleased in many a sportive ring
Around the room I jovial rode.
(*Poetical Works*, p. 117)†

Rural Elegance, published in this volume of Dodsley's *Collection*, shows true delight in

All Nature's charms immense, and heaven's unbounded love.
And Oh, the transport most allied to song,
. . . . . .
To catch soft hints from Nature's tongue
And bid Arcadia bloom around;
Whether we fringe the sloping hill,
Or smooth below the verdant mead,
Or in the horrid bramble's room
Bid careless groups of roses bloom,
Or let some sheltered lake serene
Reflect clouds, woods, and spires, and brighten all the scene.
(*Poetical Works*, pp. 129-130)

He has seen with pleasure the swain at evening

Speed whistling home across the plain,
(p. 130)

and has noted

The tangled vetch's purple bloom,
The fragrance of the bean's perfume.
(p. 132)

He exclaims with delight,

I breathe fresh gales o'er furrowed ground.
(p. 105)

Before Bryant, before Wordsworth, he calls out to men,

With Nature here high converse hold.
(p. 132)

Did Nature ever betray the heart that loved her? Moreover, was it not along one of Shenstone's own "gravel walks" that Gray himself walked safely to widespread and lasting fame when he wrote the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard?*

After the fashion of their day, Shenstone's poems are classified by his publisher. The four groups are: Elegies; Odes, Songs, Ballads, etc.; Levities, or Pieces of Humor; Moral Pieces. Perhaps I may well follow the example of his most dogmatic and injurious critic, Dr. Johnson, in considering the groups in this order, and may well consider at the same time his criticisms upon

† All references to *Poetical Works* are to Gilfillan's edition.

them (Johnson: *Works*, III, pp. 335-359). Now Johnson's sayings against men either greater or less than Shenstone have by no means passed unquestioned, despite the energy with which they were expressed and the firm hold which they took on the public mind. Cowper wrote, "I am convinced . . . that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped, by prejudice, against the harmony of Milton's" (*Life of Cowper; Private Correspondence*, edited by Grimshawe, I, p. 139). No doubt there are numbers who have shared and who share to this day the earnest indignation of Sir Egerton Brydges: "For fifty years I have had an unquenchable desire to refute Dr. Johnson's perverse criticisms and malignant obloquies" (*Life of Milton*, p. 99). Says Dugald Stewart, "How wayward and perverse in many instances are his decisions when he sits in judgment on a political adversary, or when he treads on the ashes of a departed rival" (Stewart: *Works*, IV, p. 362). Johnson was "the most unpoetical of critics." Perhaps he was also the most unfit; but was there ever anything on the whole round earth of which he felt himself in the least incompetent to judge? It is amusing to see the uncouth man, too short-sighted to see or care for a landscape, too coarse of fibre to recognize delicacy of feeling, too dull of ear to hear and enjoy the melody of lyric verse, too unhappy in solitude ever to endure it, too obtusely serious to perceive any humor but the most lumberingly laborious,—to see this oracle advance pompously to sit in judgment on Shenstone, the fastidious in taste, the loving admirer of every beauty in nature, the man of refined and tender feeling, the poet of sweet and graceful melodies, the recluse happy in his rural quiet, the humorist whose fine playfulness brightens so many of his pages.

Of the *Elegies* Johnson says that they "suit not ill" to the author's conception of Elegy, which he has in his preface "very discriminately and judiciously explained" as "the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive and always serious and therefore superior to the glitter of slight ornaments." "His thoughts are pure and simple." Johnson says further that the *Elegies* lack variety, and that they have too much resemblance one to another. This is true in large measure, but it is sameness of mood and form rather than of subject that we find. One should hardly read the twenty-six at a sitting. The range of theme

includes praise of simplicity, the language of birds, brave deeds of historic ancestors, complaint against Fortune, a recantation of the complaint, a shepherd's lament over British manufacture of woolens, the folly of superciliousness, the patriotism of the ancient Britons, and violation of the rights of sepulture, as well as the more usual themes of love and death. There is warm love of native land expressed in the fourteenth, in which he declines an invitation to visit foreign countries; the sketch of the girlish maniac on the plain is touching (Elegy XVI); and the tale of Jessy is told with a degree of real pathos (Elegy XXVI). These are, no doubt, the qualities that led the youthful Burns to call Shenstone "that celebrated poet whose divine elegies do honor to our language, our nation, and our species" (Burns: *Works*, II, p. ii, Preface to Original Kilmarnock Edition).

As to the diction, it is often and often affected, but that "it is often harsh and improper; that the words are ill-coined or ill-chosen; and his phrases unskilfully inverted," is an over-statement with which Johnson contrives to stamp the whole as worthless. It is with pleasure that we note again Shenstone's observant love of nature in such lines as these:

> Where the wild thyme perfumes the purpled heath,
> (*Poetical Works*, p. 41)
> I steal the musk-rose from the scented brake,
> (p. 40)
> Pleased if the glowing landscape wave with corn,
> (p. 50)

or the simple strength of noble thought in the following:

> The sire, in place of titles, wealth, or power,
> Assigned him virtue; and his lot was fair,
> (p. 31)
> Farewell! the virtues which deserve to live
> Deserve an ampler bliss than life bestows,
> (p. 32)

or the vivid descriptive touch and stately music of these:

> From a lone tower with reverend ivy crowned,
> (*Poetical Works*, p. 29)
> And hoary Memphis boasts her tombs alone,
> The mournful types of mighty power decayed.
> (p. 28)

It is not enough to say with Johnson, "The lines are sometimes, such as Elegy requires, smooth and easy."

Of the *Odes, Songs, and Ballads* we may accept Johnson's saying that Shenstone's "lyric poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning." That such a weight would give them the wings of inspired poesy, we cannot believe. *Rural Elegance* is exempted from the Doctor's general criticism because he has "once heard it praised by a very learned lady," and because, in spite of the irregularity of line so obnoxious to his methodical nature, it contains "philosophic argument and poetic spirit." It is not only this very irregularity, but the wholesome delight in nature, the loving intimacy with her lesser graces, and the appreciation of her uplifting power through close friendship,—it is all this that gives us pleasure in the poems although the plain is still "painted" by the flowers, as in the lines of Pope. That none of the other lyrics are, on the whole, "excellent" we may agree. Shenstone wrote to Dodsley of his own songs, "The reason there are so many is that I wanted to write *one* good song, and could never please myself" (*Works*, I, p. VI). Still, *Nancy of the Vale* and the unpublished *Valentine's Day* in the manuscript are graceful and sweet, and there is fresh music and fresh feeling in the lament of imprisoned Princess Elizabeth:

Peers can no such charms discover
All in stars and garters drest,
As on Sundays does the lover,
With his nosegay on his breast.

Hark to yonder milkmaid singing
Cheerily o'er the brimming pail.
Cowslips all around are springing,
Sweetly paint the golden vale.

Never yet did courtly maiden
Move so sprightly, look so fair;
Never breast with jewels laden
Pour a song so void of care.

Would indulgent Heaven had granted
Me some rural damsel's part!
All the empire I had wanted
Then had been my shepherd's heart.

. . . . . .

None had envied me when living,
None had triumphed o'er my tomb.

(*Poetical Works*, p. 158)

Dr. Johnson had the prevailing eighteenth-century idea that all excellence and greatness belong exclusively to dwellers in cities and are never developed in quiet rural life. We feel like saying to him, in Shenstone's lines that foreshadow Wordsworth's touch and heart:

> Learn to relish calm delight,
> Verdant fields and fountains bright,
> Trees that nod o'er sloping hills,
> Caves that echo tinkling rills.
>
> If thou canst no charm disclose
> In the simplest bud that blows,
> Go, forsake thy plain and fold;
> Join the crowd, and toil for gold.
>
> (*Poetical Works*, p. 275)

The four parts of the *Pastoral Ballad*, says Johnson, deserve particular notice, and he gives it. Yet his commendation of one passage as deserving sympathy from every mind that has any acquaintance with love or nature, of another passage as having "prettiness," and of a third as mentioning "the commonplaces of amorous poetry with some address," is more than overbalanced by his opening blunt remark that he regrets it is pastoral, that "an intelligent reader sickens at the mention of the crook, the pipe, the sheep, and the kids, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to show the beauties without the grossness of a country life." These words reveal the critic's nature. Pastoral mechanism does become wearisome truly, when we read page after page without inspiration; but in the stanzas of this poem it seems perfectly at home. It is such an essential part of the landscape (which, to be sure, Johnson did not care for) that we should no more wish it away than we should wish away the green English grass, the "pinks in a morn," and the "eglantine after a shower." After all, the shepherd's life is real; and Shenstone well knew that life and the poetic beauty of its surroundings. The ballad hardly contains the experience written in heart's blood that some few have found in it, but it is a harmonious and exquisitely delicate expression of true, though not profound, heart experience. It is "emotion recollected in tranquility."

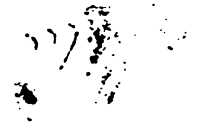
Shenstone's friends of the present day would probably be as well pleased if most of his *Levities* had not been printed. He himself would very likely have been better pleased, as we may understand from the pains he took to collect and destroy copies of his early anonymous volume of 1737 (*Curiosities of Literature*, III, p. 96, note), and from the words of Bishop Percy: "Among Shenstone's *Levities* and *Songs* are many which he himself sorely regretted to me had ever been committed to the press. But when Dodsley was printing that volume of his Miscellanies in which they first appeared, Mr. Shenstone lay ill of a fever, and, being unable to make any selection, ordered his whole portfolio to be sent to him, relying on his care to make a proper choice of what were fit to be published; but he intruded the whole into his volume, and afterwards used that as a plea for inserting them in his *Works*" (Nichols: *Illustrations*, VII, p. 152). Yet Johnson's charge that "his humor is sometimes gross and seldom sprightly" we cannot admit. *Colemira, a Culinary Eclogue*, has merit and is a not unpleasing satire on the pastoral love poem. It has an added interest in showing how Shenstone could laugh at one of his own chosen forms of poetry. *The Poet and the Dun* is a respectable version of a standard literary joke. The charge of grossness does not apply save to a part of *The Charms of Precedence* with its tale of scandal. The second half of this poem Shenstone would very likely have suppressed; the first half deserves to live for its witty touches, and has nothing to shock even the moral Johnson. The lament of Slender's Ghost over "Sweet Anne Page," so easily and so happily expressed, and the lines written at an inn at Henley, we could ill spare. Suggested by love of Shakespeare, they have a touch of Shakespeare's spirit in their human way of smiling and sighing at the same moment, and making the reader share both feelings. Dr. Johnson himself, so Boswell tells us, repeated the lines "with great emotion" when they were dining together at an excellent inn at Chapel-house:

> Whoe'er has traveled life's dull round,
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> His warmest welcome at an inn.

Boswell adds, "My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently admire Shenstone" (*Life of Johnson*, II, p. 452).

Of the *Moral Pieces*, it is only the two that are rhymed that Johnson thinks worthy of notice. *Love and Honor* he likes "well enough to wish it were in rhyme." It is a relief to the modern reader that it is not, although the heroic couplets of *The Judgment of Hercules* are pleasing enough. To quote Johnson again, "The numbers are smooth, the diction elegant, and the thought just." The Doctor's contempt for the blank verse of Shenstone is a part of his unreasoning contempt for all poetry of that form: "His blank verses those that can read them may probably find to be like the blank verses of his neighbors." Certainly it is not in such verse that Shenstone's gifts shine; he is not great enough for it. Written without genius, but carefully and with some freedom, skill, and taste, his poems of this form are pleasant on the first reading, but one is ready to wait some time for the second. Yet here again, Shenstone shows, or almost leads, the taste and tendency of his time towards variety of form and towards occasional use of richer, statelier harmonies than those of ever-recurring rhyme. Milton's influence was making itself felt against Pope's.

It is small wonder that Johnson knows not what claim *The Schoolmistress* has to stand among the moral works, although Anderson justifyingly remarks that "it abounds with . . . serious instruction" (*Poets of Great Britain*, IX, p. 590). Shenstone meant it for an entirely different place, and it is hard to understand how Dodsley could make so stupid a blunder in classification when he must have had at hand the edition of 1742, which he had himself published. There it is printed with the author's entertaining "Ludicrous Index," which is filled with the same sustained playfulness as the poem itself and was written, as the author says in his letters, "purely to show (fools) that I am in jest" (*Works*, III, p. 69). It is an agreeable addition to the poem, but was apparently not matter of fact enough to enlighten Dodsley, and might not have pierced Johnson's density. Following in their train, many readers have entirely mistaken the poet's tone. Would that the gift to perceive and enjoy the more delicate forms of jesting might be more widely spread, and so broaden and refine the literary joys of all Doctor Johnson's ilk! Would that it might be required as a qualification for every critic who is to be regarded as competent



and authoritative! As it is, Shenstone, of finer perceptions, had good reason to complain (*Works*, III, p. 69).

"*The Schoolmistress* is surely the most pleasing of Shenstone's performances," says Johnson, yet it is only intellectual pleasure that he finds in it. "We are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the sentiments, of the original author in the style; and between them the mind is kept in perpetual employment." He cares not for the genial humor, the winning youthfulness of spirit, the warm, lowly, homelike comfort playing through and around the whole. He does not hear the easy yet skilful melody. The scores of deft touches given by Shenstone's ready imagination as he sketches "learning's little tenement," "the dame disguised in look profound" wearing her russet kirtle ("Twas simple russet, but it was her own"), the children "in gaping wonderment," "the weakly wights of smaller size," her garden with "marygold of cheerful hue" and lavender with "pikes of azure bloom," her elbow-chair, her friendly hen, and her ginger-bread,—all these find no imagination in the lexicographer's heart to start in ready response.

Written avowedly as an imitation, this poem has lived for its originality. Gray may well say that it is "excellent of its kind and masterly" (Gray: *Works*, edited by Gosse, II, p. 219). Mr. Otto Daniel's doctoral thesis emphasized its value as one of the earliest pioneer works in a special literary form, the lesser epic (*Kleinepos*), in which Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, Wordworth's best poetic narratives, and finally Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* are prominent. He makes a detailed study of the three editions of the poem (1737, 1742, 1773) in regard to the literary forerunners and traditions to which Shenstone allied himself, the scope of his originality, his faithfulness to the principles of poetry that he had himself enunciated in his essays and letters—especially simplicity and variety—and his influence on his successors. As models and traditions familiar to Shenstone and giving him inspiration for *The Schoolmistress*, he cites Ovid, Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Rochester, Parnell, Pope, Ramsay, Prior, Gay, ballads, versions of the Psalms (pp. 12, 35). He notes the important fact that for his ideals of taste and genius Shenstone turned away from the French influence so long

predominant in England (p. 20). Humor is duly pointed out. The literary pedigree of the dame's "one ancient hen" is traced faithfully back through the refractory fowl in the middle of the road shown in the picture of the Hales-Owen school-house (*Gentleman's Magazine*, LXV, p. 905), Thomson's "careful hen," the solitary cat owned by Mause in *The Gentle Shepherd*, the hens mentioned with dogs and swine in Pope's *Alley*, Chaucer's Chauntecleer and Pertelote, to the single goose guarding the farmyard of the classic Baucis (pp. 63-64). A long procession of schoolmistresses and schoolmasters in literature is made to file before us in impressive, though not splendid, array, until the type is well-nigh exhausted (pp. 86-93).

Mr. Daniel seems hardly to appreciate the finer type of humorous imitation, of which this poem seems to me a master-piece, the high standard for burlesque set by Shenstone in both theory and practice (*Works*, III, pp. 61, 70). He places *The Schoolmistress* beside Pope's vulgar *Alley* (Daniel, p. 25). Moreover, he seems, like Johnson, not to perceive the deftness of descriptive touch, the musical grace, the atmosphere of familiar comfort, the boyish freshness and genial sympathy with both age and childhood, which pervade the whole. He pays little heed to

> Her apron dyed in grain as blue, I trow,
> As is the harebell that adorns the field,
> (stanza 6)

to her well-disciplined schoolroom,

> Where comely Peace of Mind and Order dwell,
> (stanza 7)

to the herbs

> That in her garden sipped the silvery dew,
> (stanza 11)
> And pungent radish, biting infant's tongue,
> (stanza 19)

to the feelings of the small offender, who after the whipping

> Abhorreth bench, and stool, and fourm, and chair,
> And deems it shame if he to peace incline,
> (stanzas 24, 26)

to the village shop, where is to be found

> The gooseb'rie clad in livery red or green,
> And here of lovely dye the Catherine pear,
> (stanza 33)

and to the cherries, which

> draw little eyes aside,
> And must be bought though penury betide.
> (stanza 34)

Still, in its conclusion reached by thorough work, it is a valuable contribution to the worth of Shenstone's poem:

"Durch das Zusammenspiel von Shenstone's litterarischen Vorgängern und seinen eigenen kritischen Ansichten, entwickelte sich die Schilderung des Kleinlebens, die früher nur als Episode in grösseren epischen Zusammenhängen begegnete, zu selbstständiger Form. Es entstand dadurch eine neue Gattung: kurze Verserzählungen von kleinen Leuten im gewöhnlichen Leben. Man kann diese Gattung als Kleinepos bezeichnen" (Daniel, p. 78).

Johnson's closing estimate is as follows:

"The general recommendation of Shenstone is easiness and simplicity; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety. Had his mind been better stored with knowledge, whether he could have been great, I know not; he could certainly have been agreeable."

The last sentence makes null and void even the slight praise that had gone before. The judge hands down his decision on Shenstone's poetry with an air of absolute finality: "inferior and disagreeable." This decision has persisted and spread like a noxious weed. Thus, as D'Israeli truthfully says, "the dogmatism of Johnson and the fastidiousness of Gray . . . have fatally injured a fine genius in Shenstone" (*Curiosities of Literature*, III, p. 90). The friends of Shenstone lay no claim to greatness in his behalf; that greater stores of learning would have made his poetry great only a pedant believes. But that he is a true and agreeable poet cannot well be denied by the unprejudiced critic. That he has genuine originality, living, though neither profound nor of wide scope, and that he has had positive influence on the growth of our literature, should be openly declared, and spread as widely as the unjust censure of his ponderous critic.

Traces of Shenstone's influence upon other and greater poets are not hard to find, and have been pointed out by D'Israeli, Gilfillan, and Daniel. I must content myself with indicating a few. The influence of *The Schoolmistress* is seen and felt plainly

in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, which has the same form, the like richness of homely detail, and the same warmly sympathetic feeling that springs from having been a part of the life portrayed. The tone is not playful; the spirit is earnest; yet, on the whole, Burns has here done for lowly rural home life what Shenstone did earlier for lowly rural school life. Goldsmith's village schoolmaster, of whom

> still the wonder grew
> That one small head could carry all he knew,

reminds one irresistibly of Shenstone's ancient dame and of her pupils, who

> think, no doubt, she been the greatest wight on ground.

One portrait is a companion-piece to the other. In his elegies Shenstone helped to set the metrical form, the tone of "pleasing melancholy" without grief, and the wide range of pensiveness for Gray's far greater work. In Gray's *Elegy*, too, we find more specific traces of Shenstone. Before the former wrote of the "village Hampden" and "some mute, inglorious Milton," the latter had shown

> A little bench of heedless bishops here,
> And there a chancellor in embryo,
> Or bard sublime, if bard may e'er be so,
> As Milton, Shakespeare, names that ne'er shall die.
> (*Poetical Works*, p. 270)

Every one recalls the perfect lines

> Full many a rose is born to blush unseen
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air,

but few know the similar lines of Shenstone:

> Why has such worth without distinction died?
> Why, like the desert's lily, bloomed to fade?
> (*Poetical Works*, p. 8)

and

> What is, unknown, the poet's skill?
> . . . . . .
> Or what the rose's blush unseen?
> (*Poetical Works*, p. 180)

Shenstone's lines,

> If thou canst no charm disclose
> In the simplest bud that blows,

foreshadowed the far richer thought of Wordsworth:

To me the meanest flower that blows can bring
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
(*Intimations of Immortality*)

The desire of the town-dweller

Midst all the city's artful trim
To rear some breathless, vapid flowers,
(*Poetical Works*, p. 133)

is reproduced by Cowper in *The Task* (Book IV, l. 750). It may not be a mere fancy of mine that the lines

I have found out a gift for my fair,
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed,
(*Poetical Works*, p. 152)

suggested to Mrs. Browning the dainty romance of little Ellie sitting by the brookside in the grass, and thinking in her dream of happiness:

I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds;
He shall love me without guile,
And to him I will discover
The swan's nest among the reeds.
(*Romance of the Swan's Nest*, stanza 4)

Emerson wrote:

"Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty deeds give no title."
(*Works*, I, p. 8).

This thought was spoken earlier by Shenstone, who, after sketching the anxious care of the wealthy land owner to secure his claim for ages by bonds and contracts, says of the muse that

her unreversed decree,
More comprehensive and more free,
Her lavish charter, taste, appropriates all we see.
(*Poetical Works*, p. 128)

Essays

Although Shenstone is best known as a poet, yet he has unquestionably greater originality as a critic of literature and of life. Dodsley was right long ago in saying, "His character as a man of clear judgment and deep penetration will best appear from

his prose works" (*Works*, I, p. vii). Of his *Essays on Men and Manners* I am tempted to write at great length. That would be necessary in order to treat the theme satisfactorily, for it seems to me of ample interest and value for an entire thesis. It must be dismissed here in merely a few paragraphs.

In easy grace, friendliness of manner, quiet humor, good sense, literary interest, and moral wholesomeness, many of these essays remind the reader of Addison's, though not as imitations. This is true of *An Impromptu*, *A Vision*, the first and second *Character*, *A Humorist*, and *An Adventure*. One or two, such as *Reserve* and the paragraph on the pleasure of paying one's debts (*Works*, II, p. 161), have a touch of Bacon's compact comprehensiveness. In range of subject we are again reminded of the *Spectator*, for we find speculations on publications, dress, ghosts, hypocrisy, religion, taste, gardening, politics, books and writers, and card playing. The reader does not easily forget the man (really Shenstone himself) who is overheard at his devotions giving thanks that his name is "liable to no pun," that it "runs chiefly upon vowels and liquids," that he can laugh at his own follies, foibles, and infirmities, and does not lack infirmities to employ this disposition (*Works*, II, pp. 23, 24). Nor does one forget the distinction between the gentleman *de facto* and the gentleman *de jure*; the tale of the spider which had enslaved the world and of the ant which obstructed that design; the allegory of the soul who forsook her guide, the matron Reason, to be led through life by the beautiful young Passions; the particulars concerning the Most Powerful Order of Beauties to be established for the ladies; the "artificial laughter" to be used by the modest man who would otherwise be laughed down by the impudent; the charming *Character* meant to delineate Richard Graves at Oxford; and the suggestion that dress should be according to merit, that "a man should not wear a French dress till he could give an account of the best French authors, and should be versed in all the oriental languages before he should presume to wear a diamond" (*Works*, II, p. 61).

The essays are short; some are unfinished; and many pages are filled with unconnected paragraphs or yet briefer aphorisms. It is remarkable that a man who had mingled so little with others and who lived so secluded a life should understand human nature,

its varieties and its idiosyncrasies so well. Some of his sayings are timely even now:

"If national reflections are unjust because there are good men in all nations, are not national wars upon much the same footing?" (*Works*, II, p. 148)

"To endeavor all one's days to fortify our minds with learning and philosophy is to spend so much in armor that one has nothing left to defend" (p. 198).

"There are many modes of dress which the world esteems handsome which are by no means calculated to show the human figure to advantage" (p. 165).

"I fancy the proper means of increasing the love we bear our native country is to reside some time in a foreign one" (p. 148).

"Not Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, nor even the Chinese language, seems half so difficult to me as the language of refusal" (p. 158).

"When a gentlemen offers me cards, I shall esteem it as his private opinion that I have neither sense nor fancy" (p. 78).

Shenstone's diction is pure and generally natural, having withal sufficient dignity. His sentences are lucid, well-turned, varied, often epigrammatic, preserving the skilful prose structure of the preceding generation. His aphorisms tempt one to quote by the score. I give a few:

"If any one's curse can effect damnation, it is not that of the pope, but that of the poor" (*Works*, II, p. 236).

"The works of a person that builds begin immediately to decay, while those of him who plants begin directly to improve" (p. 137).

"Dress, like writing, should never appear the effect of too much study and application" (p. 164).

"Laws are generally found to be nets of such texture as the little creep through, the great break through, and the middle-sized are alone entangled in" (p. 151).

"Necessity may be the mother of lucrative invention, but is the death of poetical" (p. 195).

"A courtier's dependent is a beggar's dog" (p. 148).

"Avarice is the most opposite of all characters to that of God Almighty, whose alone it is to give and not receive" (p. 230).

Letters

Of Shenstone's correspondence three volumes have been published: *Letters to Particular Friends;* Hull's *Select Letters* between the late Duchess of Somerset, Lady Luxborough, Miss Dolman, Mr. Whistler, Mr. R. Dodsley, William Shenstone, and others; and his correspondence with Thomas Percy. An undated letter of his was bought at a sale in London within a few years by Mr. Hutton, who prints it in his *Burford Papers*, saying it has been hitherto unprinted (p. 187). D'Israeli, however, quoted somewhat freely from it as from the second volume of Hull's collection (*Curiosities of Literature*, III, p. 99). A letter of special interest, written by Shenstone to Mr. MacGowan in 1761 and printed at length in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* of 1809, is given in Nichols' *Illustrations*, VII, p. 220. Of Shenstone's long correspondence with Lady Luxborough, only her own contribution has been published. In 1862 his correspondence with John Scott Hylton was in the possession of E. Jesse (*Once a Week*, VI). Dr. Hecht states that there are among the manuscripts of the British Museum letters of his to Lady Luxborough, Hylton, and Robert Dodsley, the leading publisher of his time (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. xvi). The destruction of his letters to Whistler by the latter's unsympathetic surviving brother, Shenstone deeply regretted, as he considered them among his best productions (*Works*, III, p. 269).

Hull's collection I have not succeeded in finding in the libraries of this country, and a few years ago Mr. Hutton had difficulty in obtaining it in England (*Burford Papers*). Of the intimate letters, written, as their author said to Jago, "as often as I feel a violent propensity to describe the notable incidents of my life, which amount to about as much as the tinsel of your little boy's hobby-horse" (*Works*, III, p. 157), I have quoted enough in an earlier section to show their revelations of character.

In this connection, again Gray makes an inconsiderate and unreasonable charge: "His correspondence is about nothing else but his place, and his own writings, with two or three neighboring clergymen who wrote verses too" (Gray: *Works*, III, p. 344).

Gray's charge is repeated and amplified by Mr. Gilfillan, who writes thus: "His Letters are filled with the little complaints, the little gratifications, the little journeys, the little studies, and the little criticisms, of one whom indolence and rustication had reduced to a little man. They are, however, lively and agreeably written, although not quite free from affectation. . . . The worst thing in Shenstone's correspondence is a small querulousness, which sends a jarring undertone through all its otherwise amusing pages. His very misery is of Lilliputian stature" (Shenstone: *Poetical Works*, edited by Gilfillan, p. xix).

Neither of these accusers knew anything of Shenstone's letters to Percy, which were not published until 1909. They write only from the perusal of his *Letters to Particular Friends*. Of these, nearly all are written to the two most intimate friends he ever had, Graves and Jago. To them he pours out his passing moods, his changing interests, his daily occupations. He had no wife, no sister, no one in his household with whom he could talk thus freely (his only brother, Joseph, lived at Bridgenorth), and every human being must talk of these little commonplaces to some one, now and then. His cascades, his carnations, his murmuring streams, gave him real pleasure; and his loving care of them he delighted to share, as well as his sadness when winter blighted his garden. It is only a dwarfed nature that finds no beauty and pleasure in small things. Moreover, Shenstone seriously approved of egotism in letters (*Works*, III, p. 241). Particular friends certainly wish to know of the things large and small that go to make up their friend's life. Why should not Shenstone talk of his changes in *The Schoolmistress*, of his designs for its second edition, of his verses to Venus, of his *Pastoral Ballad*, as freely as Lowell does of his volume, *The Nooning*, and of the metre in his noble *Commemmoration Ode*? Why should he not talk to his friends of his headaches and fevers, as does polished Walpole of his gout and his "bootikin" to the Countess of Ossory? Why should he not talk of the Leasowes as Scott does of the improvements at Abbotsford (*Letters to Mr. Polwhele*, September, November, 1812)? Another prince of letter-writers, Cowper, dwells freely on his own states of mind, his poetry, his little studies, and his potted plants. But as to Shenstone's writing of nothing else, what shall we say when page

after page shows his wide and keen literary interest? He writes a delightfully amusing letter in the style of *Pamela* (*Works*, III, pp. 4–6); he speaks of Thomson as "that sweet-souled bard" (p. 138); he criticizes the *Castle of Indolence* for omissions, while admiring it as an imitation of Spenser (p. 174); he has received Voltaire's new tragedy from London, and speaks of his amusement in reading the *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon* (p. 239); he finds the reading of *Clarissa Harlowe* "threatens to grow extremely tedious," as he saunters about his grounds, thinking the author might be "less prolix," though he is a "man of genius and nice observation" (p. 188); he criticises Cibber and other actors (pp. 28, 74); he lends a *Life of Socrates* (p. 188); he tires of Parson Adams (p. 81); he is "now like the rest of the world, perusing *Sir Charles Grandison*," whose author "wants the art of abridgement in everything he writes" (p. 258); he alludes often to Shakespeare and his favorite Falstaff (pp. 92, 93, 224); he finds Thomas Warton's inscriptions "too simple even for my taste" (p. 322); he advises, "Pray read Madame de Sévigné's *Letters*," and, "Of all books whatever, read Burke (second edition) *Of the Sublime and Beautiful*" (p. 337); he says, "*Rasselas* has a few refined sentiments thinly scattered, but is, upon the whole, below Mr. J——" (p. 340); he mentions (p. 363) Percy's *Reliques*; he writes of Robinson's History (p. 372), of Hull's *Rosamond* (p. 373), of *Gerard on Taste* (p. 342); he thinks *The Dunciad* "flat in the whole" (p. 37); he finds entertainment in Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty* (p. 260); he designs illustrations for *Pamela* (p. 4); he is deeply interested in a new and beautiful edition of Horace with its scholarly text and well-executed frontispiece (pp. 378, 381); he gives his estimate of Handel's music in the *Messiah* (pp. 318–319). And so I might go on, but I will pause with remarks of his on three of his critics.

"Mr. Walpole is a lively and ingenious writer; not always accurate in his determinations, and much less so in his language; too often led away by a desire of routing prejudices and destroying giants. . . . He has with great labor, in his *Book of Painters*, recorded matters of little importance relative to people that were of less. I have a right to be severe [as usual, a glint of playfulness], for his volumes cost me above thirty shillings; yet, where he drops

the *antiquarian* in them, his remarks are striking and worth perusal" (*Works*, III, pp. 381, 382).

"I have lately been reading one or two volumes of *The Rambler*; who, excepting against some few hardnesses in his manner and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most *nervous*, most *perspicuous*, most concise, and most harmonious prose-writers I know. A learned diction improves by time" (*Works*, III, pp. 353–354).

"Mr. Gray, of manners very delicate, yet possessed of a poetical vein fraught with the noblest and sublimest images, and a mind fraught with the more masculine parts of learning" (*Works*, II, p. 289).

In this connection, we may well note Shenstone's modesty and hesitation about publishing his own works. He would be "sorry to obtrude stuff" upon the world, "either from the pencil or the pen" (*Works*, III, p. 331), and he hesitates about publishing his collected works by subscription, lest, even if they are embellished with top and tail pieces and views from his farm "in an elegant manner," this method may be a trifle disreputable (*Works*, III, pp. 370, 371; *Percy-Shenstone*, pp. 69-71). Such a thing he hopes to avert by advertising that "unless a certain number were subscribed for, the whole affair should be no farther prosecuted" (*Works*, III, p. 371).

The letters to Percy, all written in Shenstone's riper years, have the same qualities—unfailing courtesy, warm friendship, ease and variety of expression, fondness for a good joke or anecdote, love of home, interest in all things artistic or literary; but the proportion of the personal is much smaller than in those to Graves and Jago, that of literary discussion much larger. The pages abound with critical comment, thoughtful suggestion, good practical sense, fineness of taste, genial breadth of spirit, wide learning, and keen understanding of the tendencies of the time. The small talk is full of easy grace. How little did Gray and Johnson understand this man! We should like to confront them with these letters, which have a charm like Lowell's and Cowper's. Fortunate indeed it is for the student of English literature that they are now accessible. My chief consideration of them belongs, however, in the next section.

Literary Criticism

Shenstone wrote no systematic or complete treatise on literature or on the principles of literary criticism. The short, interesting essay on *Elegy* is his only comprehensive treatment of even any small portion of the field of letters. For the rest, his ideas are to be found in his correspondence, and in the pages on *Books and Writers* which are in the volume of essays. I have already quoted from the *Letters to Particular Friends* many opinions on specific literary matters of his day, and they abound in his pages to Percy. The two exchange their manuscript verses and inscriptions for opinions and suggestions (*Percy-Shenstone*, pp. 10, 13, 64, 65); they exchange new books, for, in his winter seclusion, Shenstone declares, "I hunger more for a six-penny pamphlet than I do for the freshest barrel of oysters" (p. 91); each in turn urges the other to visit him, as "there will indeed be no end of writing all we have to say" (p. 43); they consider in detail the publication of Shenstone's works by subscription, and Percy strongly advises it (pp. 69-71). Shenstone urges Percy to read the *Prolusions*, *Ancient Fragments of Erse Poetry*, and Webb's treatise *On Painting*. He discusses matter for a "ludicrous essay" on false taste, and declares, in connection with Mr. Spence's history of such taste, "I do not expect any great matter from a subject of humor in my friend's hands" (p. 41). The work of the well-known Birmingham printer, Baskerville, receives both admiration and censure (pp. 41, 59, 84), and Shenstone declares that "well-judged and elegant wooden tail-pieces are an ornament much wanting to every press in Europe" (p. 66). He has been reading "the Edinburgh Homer, a Miscellany of Allan Ramsay's, Scotch Proverbs, Scotch Ballads" until, he declares, "I am grown almost a Scotchman" (p. 12). Of Webb's *Essay on Poetry*, he remarks, "He has something clever" in it, "but he is too laconic and does not say enough for what his title implies" (p. 80). Of Dr. Johnson he writes, "I have a prejudice (if prejudice it may be called) in favor of all he undertakes, and wish the world may recompense him for a degree of industry very seldom connected with so much real genius" (p. 7). His opinion of Collins' *Oriental Eclogues* is this: "The Orientals furnished a new and very fertile subject for eclogues. Poor Collins

did not wholly satisfy me, having by no means sufficiently availed himself of their many local peculiarities" (p. 31). The translation of Madame de Sévigné's *Letters* which fell in his way he finds "is very inaccurate yet somewhat spirited; seems the hasty production of some Frenchman by no means void of genius" (p. 26).

Shenstone discusses, also, older and greater authors. Vergil gives him "excessive pleasure, beyond any other writer, by uniting the most perfect harmony of metre with the most pleasing ideas or images" (p. 200). "I have sometimes thought Vergil so remarkably musical that, were his lines read to a musician wholly ignorant of the language, by a person of capacity to give each word its proper accent, he would not fail to distinguish in it, all the graces of harmony" (p. 270). Of Spenser's *Fairy Queen* Shenstone writes: "The plan appears to me very imperfect. His imagination, though very extensive, yet somewhat less so, perhaps, than is generally allowed, if one considers the facility of realizing and equipping forth the virtues and vices. . . . Much art and judgment are discovered in parts, and but little in the whole. One may entertain some doubt whether the perusal of his monstrous descriptions be not as prejudicial to true taste as it is advantageous to the imagination. Spenser, to be sure, expands the last, but then he expands it beyond its true limits" (p. 186).

There is much of value in Shenstone's enunciation of general principles; and here he shows the same taste, breadth, and penetration. Especially does he emphasize clearness, correctness, simplicity, and naturalness. He insists that obscurity is the reverse of all good writing, and goes so far as to wish to banish enigmas for this reason (*Recollections*, p. 99). "Nothing," he declares, "tends so much to produce drunkenness and even madness as the frequent use of parentheses in conversation" (*Works*, II, p. 201). He is "a passionate lover of simplicity" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 74), and has tried in his "correcting" of his own works to secure ease and simplicity (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 74). "Very few sentiments are proper to be put in a person's mouth during the first attack of grief. Everything disgusts but mere simplicity," and he cites the scriptural writers (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 194). He turns also to the classics: "The chief advantage that ancient writers can boast over modern ones, seems owing to simplicity. Every

noble truth and sentiment was expressed by the former in the natural manner; in word and phrase, simple, perspicuous, and incapable of improvement. What then remained for later writers but affectation, witticism, and conceit?" (See also *Percy-Shenstone*, pp. 46, 80; *Works*, II, pp. 176, 203).

Naturalness in characters he stresses thus: "Perfect characters in a poem make but little better figure than regular hills, perpendicular trees, uniform rocks, and level sheets of water in the formation of a landscape. The reason is, they are not natural, and moreover want variety" (*Works*, II, p. 184). "One feels the same kind of disgust in reading Roman history which one does in novels, or even epic poetry. . . . The hero, the knight-errant, and the Roman are too seldom overcome" (*Works*, II, p. 196). He emphasizes the same quality in style. "I hate a style, as I do a garden that is wholly flat and regular; that slides along like an eel, and never rises to what one can call an inequality" (*Works*, II, p. 176). He dislikes "the present pomp and haughtiness of style" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 18), flowery rhetoric (*Works*, II, p. 193), and the practice of those writers who "think they cannot too much stiffen, or raise, or alienate their language from the common idiom" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 74). Emotion he considers essential to poetry. "I think nothing truly poetic, at least no poetry worth composing, that does not strongly affect one's passions" (*Works*, II, p. 176. See also *Percy-Shenstone*, p. 46).

His fastidious taste in the music of verse is shown over and over again, and he finds "small pleasure in poetical prose unless exquisitely well-tuned" (*Works*, III, p. 38). Of MacPherson's *Ossian*, he writes, "I think a translator of a finer ear might cause these things to strike infinitely more, and yet be faithful to the sense (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 69). "Harmony of period and melody of style," Shenstone asserts, "have greater weight than is generally imagined in the judgment we pass upon writing and writers. As a proof of this, let us reflect what texts of scripture, what lines of poetry, or what periods we most remember and quote, either in verse or prose; and we shall find them to be only musical ones" (*Works*, II, p. 204. See also pp. 180, 181, 203, 170, 275; and *Percy-Shenstone*, p. 17). Alliteration he declares "an easy kind of beauty," which has "probably had its day" (*Works*, II, pp. 179-180).

On many lesser principles of literature there are remarks worth noting. "There is nothing so disagreeable in works of humor as an insipid, unsupported vivacity, the very husks of drollery" (*Works*, II, p. 267). "A poet that fails in writing becomes often a morose critic" (*Works*, II, p. 186). "Critics must excuse me if I compare them to certain animals called asses, who, by gnawing vines, originally taught the great advantage of pruning them" (*Works*, II, p. 192). "It is idle to be much assiduous in the perusal of inferior poetry. Homer, Vergil, and Horace give the true taste in composition; and a person's own imagination should be able to supply the rest" (*Works*, II, p. 194). "May not excess of negligence discover affectation as well as its opposite extreme?" (*Works*, II, p. 274). The aim of elegy is to treat any kind of subjects "in such a manner as to diffuse a pleasing melancholy" (*Works*, I, p. 5). "The grand exception to fables consists in giving speech to animals, etc., a greater violation of truth than appears in any other kind of writing. . . . Their peculiar advantage is to remove the offensiveness of advice. . . . One should perhaps pursue a medium betwixt the superfluous garniture of La Fontaine, and the naked simplicity and laconism of Phaedrus" (*Works*, III, p. 333). It is Shenstone's maxim "to take no notice of undeserved censure" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 31); and of Grainger's defense against the scurrility of Smollett, he exclaims, "Who would fight a scavenger in the street?" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 16) He tires of the "modern shackles of a long string of rhymes, which often "make a second line languish and appear only a supplement to the first" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 22). Of the distinction to be made between songs and ballads, he says, "For my own part, I, who love by means of different words to bundle up distinct ideas, am apt to consider a ballad as containing some little story, either real or invented" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 52).

Translation Shenstone did not regard as literary work of great value. "I have known a person of the truest genius take great pains to translate a poem, when with one tenth part of the labor he could have composed a poem ten times better" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 31). He urges Percy by all means to read Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*, and would not murmur at the effect if it should deter him from writing any more translations after that

of Ovid, provided it would lead him to write originals (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 17). Dr. Brandl observes that this influential book of Young's was greeted with undivided warmth only by Horace Walpole and Shenstone (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 103).

The desires and dawning tendencies of the age Shenstone understood remarkably. He shows this nowhere, perhaps, so plainly as in a letter written to Mr. MacGowan concerning the fragments of Erse poetry:

"The translator has taken pretty considerable freedoms in adapting them to the present reader. I do not in the least disapprove of this, knowing by experience that trivial amendments in these old compositions often render them highly striking, which would otherwise be quite neglected. . . . I would wish the editor particularly attentive to the melody of his cadences, when it may be done without impeachment of his fidelity. The melody of our verse has been, perhaps, carried to its utmost perfection; that of prose seems to have been more neglected, and to be capable of greater than it has yet attained. It seems to be a very favorable era for the appearance of such irregular poetry. The taste of the age, so far as it regards plan and style, seems to have been carried to its utmost height. . . . The public has seen all that art can do, and they want the more striking effect of wild, original, enthusiastic genius. . . . Here is indeed pure, original genius, the very quintessence of poetry, a few drops of which, properly managed, are enough to give a flavor to quart bottles" (Nichols: *Illustrations*, VII, p. 220).

Shenstone was one of the best-known men of letters of his time. His judgment and assistance were freely asked by such men as Jago, Graves, Vernon, Hull, and Dodsley, and were freely given. They were valued not only for their courtesy, but also for their firm frankness. He does not fail occasionally to criticize his friends rather sharply, or at least plainly, as he thinks "this is the business of friendship in all circumstances of this kind" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 63). He writes of Percy's cherished translation of a Chinese novel: "The novel, though in some parts not void of merit, must certainly draw its chief support from its value as a curiosity. . . . . I think the public must esteem itself as much obliged to the editor as the editor has grounds to be offended

at the printer" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 63). He has asked Percy to translate a certain tuneful little French chanson, which has charmed him, but writes to the translator about the result: "Mr. Percy, I conceive, held the little chanson rather too cheap. The translation will not do, either in point of metre or expression" (p. 30). Another time he says bluntly, "The printed ballads you sent are, I think, by no means worth preserving" (*Works*, II, p. 45).

Dr. Hecht assures us that the correspondence with Robert Dodsley shows much of Shenstone's judgment and enriching assistance in the collection of *Poems by Several Hands* and in Dodsley's own tragedy of *Cleone* (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. XVI). His published letters also show this (*Works*, III, pp. 257, 282, 288, 298, 303), and show besides how much he helped and influenced the same publisher in his collection of fables (*Works*, III, pp. 333, 361, 362, 365; *Percy-Shenstone*, pp. 41, 69). But his fullest, most positive, and most far-reaching influence of this nature was in connection with the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* of Thomas Percy, who was then the young chaplain of the Earl of Sussex, and afterwards Bishop of Dromore.

Although Percy, with his apologetic air in the original preface of his *Reliques*, did not suspect it, the volume was to be one of the strongest, most wholesome, and most lasting influences in bringing English poetry back from the stilted and the stereotyped to freshness and to pulsing life (*Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, p 133; *Percy-Shenstone*, p. xi). Dr. Johnson had advised the publication of the ballads, and had seemed to approve it, promising to help in selecting and revising, and to furnish an abundance of learned notes. "These promises, however," writes Percy, "he never executed, nor, except for a few slight hints delivered *viva voce*, did he furnish any contributions, etc." (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 9) Furthermore, in the *Rambler* in 1751 he ridiculed the taste for ballads; and he was not a man of changeable mind (*Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, p. 134). Instead of Johnson, Shenstone became Percy's constant adviser in this matter, until his illness and death, giving freely and fully of his advice in frequent letters and in prolonged conversations with Percy at the Leasowes (*Percy-Shenstone*, p 49). "The manuscript was shown to several learned and ingenious friends," writes the

editor, "who thought the contents too curious to be consigned to oblivion, and importuned the possessor to select some of them and give them to the press. . . . At length the importunity of his friends prevailed, and he could refuse nothing to such judges as the author of the *Rambler* and the late Mr. Shenstone," (*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, I, p. xiii). "The plan of this work was settled in concert with the late elegant Mr. Shenstone, who was to have borne a joint share in it, had not death unhappily prevented him. . . . It is doubtless a great loss to this work that Mr. Shenstone never saw more than about a third of one of these volumes, as prepared for the press" (p. xvii).

Without Shenstone, the old ballads so fortunately saved from kindling fires to warm the hands, would probably never have been published to warm the heart; for, although they gave lively pleasure to the owner, he was much afraid of being ridiculed as a mere ballad-monger if he showed a taste for such things (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 87). His first mention of his "curious old manuscript collection of ancient ballads" (1757) brings from Shenstone the eager response, "You pique my curiosity extremely by the mention of that ancient manuscript, as there is nothing gives me greater pleasure than the simplicity of style and sentiment that is observable in old English ballads. If aught could add to that pleasure, it would be an opportunity of perusing them in your company at the Leasowes, and pray do not think of publishing them until you have given me that opportunity. . . . Suppose you consider your manuscript as an hoard of gold, somewhat defaced by time, from which, however, you may be able to draw supplies upon occasion, and with which you may enrich the world hereafter under more current impressions" (*Percy-Shenstone*, pp. 6, 7). Percy, delighted with this interest on the part of the man of note, offered now a copy of one of the ballads, and now a transcript of a large number, as a friendly bribe for "making corrections" on some of his own work (*Percy-Shenstone*, pp. 10, 15). Again, by promising a sight of the whole folio, he tried to induce Shenstone to visit him (p. 21), and the home-lover acknowledged that the temptation was great (p. 24). After Percy's visit to the Leasowes in 1750, interest waxed yet keener, and many pages of correspondence were given to discussion of the treasures. As his heart failed him now and

then, Shenstone encouraged and even urged the publication of the ballads (pp. 58, 63) and wrote: "There is no room that I can see to question the reception that your work is like to meet with. If I have any talent at conjecture, all people of taste throughout the kingdom will rejoice to see a judicious, a correct and elegant edition of such pieces" (p. 46). Shenstone aided in collecting old Scotch and Welsh ballads for the book (pp. 58, 86) and promised help in making designs for it (p. 54).

His advice was especially emphatic and effective on two points —restraint in the size and quality of the contents, and a certain yielding to the prevailing taste of the day. He hoped that the "prodigious pains" of Mr. Percy would "be employed rather to fill a moderate collection with the best readings of good ballads than to swell such a collection to any great extent" (p. 51). And he gave the warning, "Once for all, it is extremely certain that an over-proportion of this kind of ballast [ballads with "not a single particle of poetical merit"] will sink your vessel to the bottom of the sea. Therefore be upon your guard in time. Neither have you any reason to be apprehensive that your volumes should be deficient in point of bulk" (p. 79. See also pp. 44, 66, 88). Percy heeded the advice. He replied: "To oblige you, I have stipulated with the bookseller only to print two volumes, provided the materials for a third are not quite so good as those of the two first, which are to be printed off first out of the very cream and quintessence of our collections. And, to prevent ever degrading the work by additional volumes, etc., we have made an express article that, if we should at length find very excellent materials for a third volume, no inducement whatever is to give birth to a fourth. . . . You see I shall give up near forty pounds by dropping a third volume to oblige you; but I assure you I shall do it with the greatest pleasure to obtain the approbation of so valuable a friend and so excellent a judge, and no dirty motives of lucre shall induce me to disgrace a work, which you are so indulgent as to think well of" (p. 54).

Percy has been much criticised for publishing the ancient poems with retouching, modernizing, and conventionalizing; in this matter he agreed with Shenstone, who strongly advised the very course that he pursued. At first thought, such action

seems to show lack of artistic judgment, and of literary honor; yet when we consider the reason for which it was done and the absence of any standards in such matters at that time, we may surely admit that these eighteenth century editors were in the right. Shenstone felt that unless these "amendments" were made, the old ballads would be entirely neglected by all but pedants (Nichols: *Illustrations*, VII, p. 220). He would seek a larger audience, the general reading public; he would not have the treasure published unimproved, only "for the benefit of other artists" (*Percy-Shenstone*, p. 75). Those without learning would not value the old pieces in their unchanged form, would hardly even read them. Shenstone understood his age so well that it seems almost certain this method, now so objectionable, was largely the means of securing for the *Reliques* their wide and deep influence, even though it was carried to an almost absurd extent in the suggestion that the *Fight at Otterburne* should be omitted, as having more merit as a curiosity than as poetry, till the public's reception of the first two volumes was certain (p. 66). He wrote, "I believe I shall never make any objections to such improvements as you bestow . . . unless you were plainly to contradict antiquity, which I am pretty sure will never be the case" (p. 44). And so the corrections went on; even the following atrocious "improvement" suggested by Percy was allowed to pass:

> His hair was like the threeds of gold
> Shot frae the burning sun, (*Drawne frae Minerva's loom*)
> His lips like roses drapping dew—
> His breath was a perfume.

The same yielding to the general taste of the times is shown in much of Shenstone's advice as to the arrangement of the volumes. He would not have the text smothered by notes (p. 47). Short poems should be mingled with the longer ones, lest the reader become weary. It would be well to place first in each separate volume the older pieces, which are irregular and sub-obscure; then a series of later ones; and finally some modern pieces in a similar style. By placing in the first volume all the obsolete pieces, "not agreeable to the general taste," the beginning of the work "might be liable to give disgust" (pp. 75, 66). Much feeling of responsibility is shown in Shenstone's insistence that, even after his de-

tailed opinion about each poem and the arrangement of all, he shall receive a transcription of the whole before it is sent to press (p. 43).

Conclusion

As we look back over the quiet life and unhurried work of William Shenstone, we realize that he accomplished much. He lived and died a gentleman, always courteous, sincere, sensitive, affectionate, with a blending of gentle melancholy and playful humor. With small means he made his pasture-land a place of natural though artistic beauty, which did much to form and fix the best modern taste in English gardening. As a poet he has left us at least one pastoral whose sweet, graceful melody and genuineness of tender feeling still please even the critic's ear and linger in his memory; as poet, too, he is a pioneer in a literary form now well recognized and well loved in English literature—the narrative of the everyday life of common people. As humorist, his fine, quiet playfulness has triumphed over his critics of clumsier nature and brought them to absurdities of statement simply because they did not perceive it. He is an essayist whose fresh and gracious little papers may well stand near Addison's and be remembered with them. He wrote letters whose pages have still an easy charm for one who sits down at leisure to enjoy his hearty friendship, his interest in all books and movements new in the literary world of his day, and his discriminating judgment of such matters. To his encouragement and opinions as a critic was largely due the publication of Percy's *Reliques* with its widespread influence. In a time when the fetters of rigid French conventionality still lay heavy upon English letters, he turned both his theory and his practice, on the whole, towards simple naturalness, though he did not always achieve it, especially in his poetry. He loved and *lived* the simple life. Surely such work has value in itself; such influence has been a working force, though always quiet and often unrecognized or unacknowledged. Surely, then, to William Shenstone is due lasting respect and a share, though small, of enduring honor from those who would judge fairly of the makers and the making of our changing, living literature.

CHAPTER V

Unpublished Poems from the Manuscript

To Miss . . . not dancing at a Ball.

While round in wild Rotations hurld,
These *shining Forms* I view,
Methinks ye busy restless World
Is imag'd in a Few.

So may the giddy World advance!
And thus may Fate decree,
It still may have it's *active Dance*,
Whilst *I* retire with Thee!
W. S.

For Valentine's Day

Recitative.

Twas Spring, when all the plumy Quire
In nuptial Treaty joins;
When tepid Gales with Love conspire,
And bless their soft Designs;
Melissa rang'd ye Fountain's side,
And thus, in artless accents, cry'd.

Air

Happy Warblers! Love enjoying,
Free from Censure, free from Fears!
Happy Love! which, never cloying,
Musick's tunefull voice endears!
What can mortal sweeter prove,
Than the Chorus of the Grove?
Thus to sing & thus to love!

Recitative.

The Boy that lov'd Melissa best,
Behind the flow'ring Limes was laid;
He pour'd the secret from his Breast,
And thus bespoke ye blushing Maid.

Air

If a Linnet's vocal strain
Can Melissa's Envy move;
If a Blackbird's amorous Pain
Thus commend the Sweets of Love,
What to Deities can be,
Above the sweet Felicity,
Like *you* to sing, or Love like *me?*

For a Beech.

Ye rural Maids, & rustic Swains!
That here your annual vows renew!
Are Kings or Queens so free from Pains,
Are they so blest in Love as you?

Then may ye live content wth Fate;
Yet ever *seem* your Fate to moan;
Shou'd Courtiers know your happy state,
Ye shou'd not taste it long, *alone.*

SONNET.

The Crown encircled *Juno's* Hair;
The Crescent bright was *Cynthia's* Share;
The Helmet mark'd *Minerva's* Mien;
But Smiles bespoke the *Cyprian* Queen.

Her Train was form'd of Smiles & Loves;
Her Chariot drawn by gentlest Doves;
And from her Zone the Nymphs might find,
'Twas Beauty's Province to be kind.

Why then will lovely *Delia* drown
Celestial Beauties, in a *Frown?*
Smile from your Brows those Clouds away,
And, to that Heav'n, restore ye day.

Nor let it grieve my charming Fair,
That I, her slave, the Blessing share;
That Smiles an equal Life impart
To *Delia's* Charms—& *Strephon's* Heart.
S.

To the Honourable Mrs Knight, at ye Time She was laying out her Villa.

Tho' ev'ry blooming Plant conspires
To grace ye Tracts Asteria treads;
And softest Notes, & sweetest Lyres
Endear Asteria's favour'd Meads;
Yet may her *Candour* not disdain
The tribute of a distant Plain.

And may that *smiling Virtue* shew,
What Fates on distant Plains attend;
That, if a Cadence smoothly flow,
Or if a tuneless Line offend,
The *first* her fair Idea grac'd;
And that her Absence caus'd ye last.

How oft my roving Fancy leads
To Shades that soothe her pensive Hour;
Where Nature reigns, whence Art recedes,
Yet leaves improv'd her charming Bow'r;
Recedes, Asteria's Taste refines,
And there, with Nature too, she shines.

The verdant Gloom wth what Delight
Each well-amus'd Spectator views!
How pleas'd he bids Adieu to Light!

To all, but that which *You* diffuse!
With just Regret is that resign'd,
Which chears ye Eye, & charms ye Mind.

What Transports in each Breast supply
The feather'd warbler's melting strains!
The lawless *Pindars* of the Sky
That harmonize these blissfull Plains!
That, to the Sun, *their* Notes renew,
While tunefull *Floris* sings to you.

Where ye tall solemn Grove aspires,
How fair those artfull Turrets rise!
And where this humbler vale retires,
Now polish'd Nature charms our Eyes!
O skill'd to guide her Footsteps true!
Skill'd, with your Pencil, to pursue.

Nor blame the less presuming Muse,
That humbly paints a Grott or Lawn;
And seems the Pattern to refuse,
Whence noblest Virtues *might* be drawn;
The lovely Fruits of *Taste* & *Care*
Tis *Fame*, as well as *Bliss* to share.

Yet even these, their various Grace,
When *You* your Wit & Charms display,
These, wch wth Pleasure *all* must trace,
All may, without Amaze, survey.
Reserve, ye Swains, your fond Surprize,
To lavish on Asteria's Eyes.

The Pilgrim who bewilder'd roves
Where sweet *Idalia's* Goddess reigns,
Thro' myrtle Thickets, Citron Groves,
And lilly'd Banks & roseate Plains,
Wou'd slight their Charms, if *she* were seen,
And pleas'd adore his fav'rite Queen.

W. S.

THE SANCTUARY.

Too scornfull Pleasure! check thy Pace;
Breathless & faint I urge ye Chace;
And now I loiter slow behind,
While fleeting, Thou outstripst ye Wind.

Stay, gentle Pleasure! stay thine Haste
Till Life's allotted Period's past;
Soothe envious *Time* till *that* is o'er,
And He shall tyrannize no more.

Life can alas! no more amuse;
And *Pleasure* flies & *Pain* pursues:
All sick & faint wth fond Desire,
To what safe Shrine shall I retire?

A Shrine there is, my Delia's Breast;
Near that *fair Altar* let me rest;
To that *kind Refuge* quick repair,
And Pain dare never seize me there.

S.

[Above a Painting of a Stream Bordered by Trees]

Here Luxb'rough sate; Ye streams y^t^ gently glide!
Whene'er ye chance to meet a *richer* Tide,
Ah! warn it not to slight your little store;
Say Luxb'rough prais'd you, & you ask no more.

Inscription
For a medicinal Fountain,
in my Farm

Thou sacred Nymph! whose pious Care
Pours from thine urn this min'ral Rill;
Whose healing Draughts, like crystal fair,
In pleasing Murmurs here distill!

Who guidst ye Stream, & joyst to dwell
Where Murmurs soft w^th^ *Use* agree,
May *Phoebus* haunt this hallow'd Well,
And all *his Sisters* learn of Thee.

Pupils.

The Roses reconcil'd.

By Party Rage & stern Debate
Idalia's Realm was tore;
Two Beauties sought to rule ye State,
And rival *Hues* they wore.

The gentle *Cloe* soft & kind
The Rose *she* bore, was *pale*;
The rural *Dian* hop'd to find
Her *crimson* Buds prevail.

Pity Love's genrous Train shou'd *grow*,
Or shou'd *continue* Foes;
Go forth, my Dear! my Delia, go
These civil Feuds compose.

Soon wilt thou see thy Pow'r divine
Oer ev'ry Eye extend;
Since neer did Cheek so soft as thine
The varying Roses blend.

Mr Shenstone to Mr Whistler

'Tis strange, that sway'd by Passion's Laws
While thousands wide of *Reason* stray,
Some err with Credit, nay, Applause;
And some, *ignobly*, lose their way.

The Name of Prudence, injur'd Name!
Is giv'n ye mercenary Mind;
Has Fortune seiz'd ye Trump of *Fame*?
Or is she too, like Fortune, blind?

To lure some ill-experienc'd Heir,
The formal Cit assiduous toils;
He spreads unseen ye fatal Snare,
Yet neer at Ease enjoys ye Spoils.

In roseate shades, & myrtle Bow'rs,
Wildly ye raptured Poet roves;
Enjoys ye balm of op'ning Flow'rs,
And melting Musick of ye Groves,

Yet *He* among y^e^ *Wise* is plac'd,
He seems alone to have ye Blessing,
wins
Who gains what he can never taste;
Not He who tastes ev'n *not* possessing.

Florio, a Plant by tender Hands
On Paper carv'd, with Rapture gains;
Gomez, the timber'd Oak demands,
Yon spreading tree that shades ye Plains.

Give me says . . . an Otho's Head,
Tho' Lands, Trees, Tenements, be sold;
Him . . . sneers, & pleas'd indeed
Views *modern Majesty* in Gold.

The Merchant buys a Vessel's Load;
Goes home & brags on't to his Par'tner:
Mead hugs his vast prodigious Toad,
Swearing By G—d he's bit ye Gard'ner.

O You! who by a skillfull Aim
From right Opinion seldom err,
Will you the *lavish* trifler blame?
Can you y^e^ *sordid* Breast prefer?

For this the Sum—our vain Desires
Whether or *Wealth* or *Whim* allures,
vacant
The trivial *Sterling* one admires;
And one, the trifles it procures.

Yet sure, of all ye various Bliss
A social Mind can wish to share,
What most the *Wise* shou'd value, is,
A generous Friend, or gentle Fair.

Whose spreading antlers shade ye plains.

Whene'er y^e^ *Lover's* Ardours move,
Or *Friendship* warms, a breast sincere,
What Joys so ravishing, as Love?
Or what, like Friendship, persevere?

When Life's chagrining Ills increase,
To some *soft Bosom* we repair;
That sacred Shrine protects our Peace,
hardly
And Pain dare never seize us there.

Friendship, ye Muses other Theme,
When rival Passions are at strife,
Guards us from ev'ry wild Extreme,
And skreens us, thro' ye Clime of Life.

Had poor *Kilmarnock* known a *Friend*,
Their ill-star'd Biass to controul,
He ne'er had known the timeless End
That shocks the temper of my Soul.

"The Centinel that sleeps, shall dye."
Why, *Virtue* nods, some *luckless* Hour;
Well may *He* wish some Friend were nigh,
such
That, on these Terms, defends ye Tow'r.

But *Phoebus* now, who bids me quit
The Flow'rets that in Fancy spring,
Has giv'n me *Warmth* instead of *Wit*;
Content to *feel* what others *sing*.

And sweetly sing—The Fair, The Friend
Have shar'd the Poet's noblest Lays;
Yet none could e'er his Theme transcend;
None, to the *Merit*, suit the *Praise*.

The Image of one soft-ey'd Maid
Dispells the Gloom of vulgar Care;
Refines the Taste, & lends it's Aid
In all that's gen'rous, mild, or fair.

generous
The Image of a virtuous Friend
Confirms our virtue, Noon & Morn;
And may that Friendship never end,
Which I *profess*, & you *adorn*.

The Ever-green

When genial May's indulgent Care
Had giv'n the Grove it's wonted Shade;
Pensive & grave, my charming Fair,
Beneath a branching Lime, was laid.

Flourish, said I, those favour'd Boughs!
And ever soothe ye purest Flames!
Witness to none but faithfull vows!
Wounded by none but faithfull Names!

Yield ev'ry Tree that forms ye Grove
To this which pleas'd my wand'ring Dear!
Range where ye list, ye Bands of Love,
Ye still shall *seem* to revel here!

She smild, &, whilst her lovely Arm
Her fair reclining Head sustain'd,
Betray'd she felt some fresh Alarm,
And thus ye meaning Smile explain'd.

When vernal Suns shine forth no more,
Will *then* this Lime its Shelter yield?
When wintry Storms around me roar,
Will not it's Leaves bestrew ye Field?

Yet faithfull then the *Fir* shall last—
I smile, she said, but ah! I tremble,
To think, when *my* fair Season's past,
Which *Damon* then will most resemble.

An obvious Answer

Too tim'rous Maid, can Time or Chance
A pure ingenuous Flame controul?
O lay aside that tender Glance;
It melts my Frame, It kills my Soul.

Were Daphne's *Charms* alone admir'd,
Frail Origin of female Sway!
My Flame, like vulgar Flames, inspir'd,
Might then, like *vulgar* Flames, decay.

But whilst thy *Soul* shall seem thus fair,
Thy *Mind* retain it's wonted Mien,
Thou mayst resign that Shape & Air,
Yet find thy Swain—an Ever-green.

STANZAS
On the Discovery of Chelt'nam Waters by Pigeons

Matre Deâ monstrante viam!

Go forth, my Doves, ye Goddess cry'd,
On *Chelt'nam's* flow'ry Plains reside;
Near yonder Fountains feed & Play,
And you, my *Delia*, mark their way.

And where they close their rapid Road,
Be *there* awhile my Nymphs abode:
For *there* returning Health shall warm;
Shall reinspirit ev'ry Charm.

That sovereign steel, whose Pow'r is known,
To seat the Monarch on his Throne,
In yonder Mineral Springs shall rise,
To fix the sway of *Delia's* Eyes.

Their former Bloom thy cheeks shall gain,
Thy Lovers feel their former Pain;
For thus went forth a late Decree,
Sign'd by the Queen of *Health* & *Me.*

Nor envy you ye glitt'ring Prize
That blest my Trojan's* dazled Eyes;
Not *more* propitious to his Vow
I pointed out y^e^ *golden Bough.*

Oh! Health excells the radiant Spray,
Which rul'd that Heroe's destin'd way;
He to *Elysian* scenes cou'd steer,
But Health bestows *Elysium here.*

The Doves divide their airy way;
The Nymph as fair, as soft as They,
Beholds them shut their silver wings;
And seeks the salutary Springs.

Ah faithfull, faithless Streams! that flow
The Source of Health, ye Source of Woe!
That give her Eyes their wonted Fire,
Whilst all that gaze, alas! expire.

*Aeneas. S.

Lysander to Chloe.

Tis true my Wish shall never find
Another Nymph, so fair, so true!
And all that's bright & all that's kind,
I ever own'd were met in you.

And I with gratefull zeal cou'd haste
To *China* for ye merest Toy;
Cou'd scorch whole years on *Lybia's* waste,
To give my Dear a moment's Joy.

But fickle as the Wave or Wind,
I once may slight those lovely Arms;
Pardon a free *ingenuous* Mind—
I do not half deserve thy Charms.

If I in any Art excell,
Tis, in soft strains to breathe my Flame;
But so much sweetness bids me tell,
It will not long persist ye same.

I know it's Season will expire;
I know it's Transports will be flown;
Nor more *thy* matchless Breast admire,
Than I detest & scorn my *own*.
W.

The Amorous Inconstant.

Ah me! the flatt'ring Scene is o'er;
And Verse, & Numbers charm no more:
For why, my Pain my hopeless Woe,
Nor verse can paint, nor Numbers shew.

O now farewell that soothing Lay
Where many a Fountain seem'd to play!
Where many a vernal Flowret shone—!
Lysander's Occupation's gone.†

Not long releas'd from Silvia's Chain,
How soon I dar'd the Toils again!
By *Fate*, by *Nature* doom'd to prove
The Folly & the Force of Love.

Thro all ye Grove, my foolish Tongue
Proclaim'd aloud my wond'rous wrong,
My wond'rous Torture to display,
I stop'd ye Stranger on his Way.

† Parody, Othello's occupation's gone. See Othello.

Unweeting
Imprudent both to young & old
curs'd
I blam'd ye fatal Pow'r of Gold;
And, courting all that deign'd to hear,
I *blam'd it* in a *Miser's* Ear.

And now I feel my flutt'ring Heart
Must act again the trifling Part;
Nor all that Foe or Friend shall say
Can lessen *Cynthia's* rigid Sway.

But *other* Nymphs, but *other* Fires
May banish *old* by *new* Desires;
Till one of more imperious Eye
let
Dissolve my chains & bid me dye.
W.

Imitated at large from Horace's "Petti nihil me, etc. "practis'd on a Miser's, etc:" Line 4th qu:

[No title]
Then take a Nymph benign & fair
A soul refin'd, a generous spirit
And I'll insure you happiness
That equals all—but what you merit.

Unpublished Latin Inscriptions from the Manuscript

IN MEMORIAM FLIRTILLAE,
PUSILLAE NIMIRUM CANIS, ET INNOCIIAE;
AGILIS, BLANDAE, TENERAE, PULCHERRIMAE;
QUAE DOLORE PARTÛS CORREPTA,
AMORIS SUI SIGNA AD MORTEM USQUE EDIDIT;
AT EHEU! SINE PROLE PEREUNS
NULLAM RELIQUIT PAREM.

O Viator!
Tales animas in coelis requiescere
Confide
Tales ne terris desint
Precare.

Hunc juxta locum
Mortales sui exuvias
Lxx Annorum Invidia
Tandem dilaceras
Placide deposuit
M. A.
Amicum mancipium Domino
Frugi q^{d} sit satis.

Inscriptions on a small Mausoleum supported by Four Ionic Pillars, at Mrs Bateman's at old Windsor, an elegant Seat on the Banks of the Thames, in the Gothic Stile, surrounded by a Grove, wth 16 Acres of Ground well ornamented.

Ut Animarum immortalium Exuviae
Ab ignobili terrae Pulvere secernerentur.
Et in ameniori positae loco
Blandâ fruerentur Quiete
Ubique dispersas collegit,
Et in hoc tumulo repone voluit
Ricardus Batemane,
Amenitatis Cultor, et primaevae
Antiquitatis Restitutor, Pietatis Ergo.

D. M.

Ad conservandos Cineres
Illustrium virorum,
Antiquo=vindesorensium
Quorum nomina, et virtutes
Parvula haec non capit tabella
Hic manus ob patriam. etc.

Poems Having More Stanzas in the Manuscript Than in Their Published Forms

Daphne's Visit.

Ye Doves! for whom I rear'd y^{e} Grove,
With melting Lays salute my Love;
My Daphne with your Notes detain,
Or I have rear'd ye Grove in vain.

Ye Flow'rs! which early Spring supplies,
Display at once your brightest Dyes;
That she your op'ning charms may see,
Or what were *else* your charms to me?

Kind Zephyr! brush each fragrant Flow'r,
And shed its odours round my Bow'r;
Or ne'er again, O gentle Wind!
Shall I, in thee, refreshment find.

Ye Streams! if eer wth Art I strove,
Your native murmurs to improve,
May each soft Murmur soothe my Fair,
Or Oh! 'twill deepen *my* Despair.

Be sure, ye Willows! you be seen
Array'd in liveliest Robes of Green;
Or I will tear your slighted Boughs,
And let them fade around my Brows.

And Thou, my Grott! whose lonely Bounds
The melancholy Pine surrounds,
May she admire thy peacefull Gloom,
Or thou shalt prove her Lover's Tomb.

W. S.

In Winter 1746.

Ye Groves with wintry Rigour brown!
    Ye Skies no longer blue!
Too much I feel from *Delia's* Frown,
    To bear these Frowns from *you.*

Where is ye Spring's delightfull green?
    The Summer's ample Bow'r?
And where my *Delia's* wonted Mien,
    That brighten'd ev'ry Flow'r?

Where'er my lovesick Limbs I lay,
    To shun the rushing wind,
It's busy *murmur* seems to say,
    She never *will* be kind.

The *Naiads,* o'er their frozen Urns,
    In icy chains repine;
And each, in sullen silence, mourns
    Her Freedom lost—like *mine.*

No more the warbling Birds rejoice;
    Of all that chear'd ye Plain,
Echo alone retains her Voice,
    And She—repeats my Pain!

Soon will the Sun's returning Rays
    The chearless Frost controul;
When will relenting Delia chase
    The Winter of my soul!

Queen Elizabeth, a Ballad.
The tune. "Come & listen to my Ditty."
Inscribed. To the R^{t} Honble Lady Hertford
now Dutchess of Somerset.

Will you hear how once repining
Poor *Eliza* captive lay?
Each ambitious Thought resigning,
Foe to Riches, Pomp, & Sway?

While the Nymphs & Swains delighted
Tript around in rural Pride,
Envying Joys, by others slighted,
Thus the royal Maiden cry'd.

Bred on Plains, or born in Valleys,
Who would bid those scenes Adieu?
Stranger to the Arts of Malice
Who wou'd ever Courts pursue?

Censure, never taught to treasure,
Censure never taught to bear,
Love is all the Shepherd's Pleasure
Love is all the Damsel's Care.

How can they of humble Station
Fondly blame the Pow'rs above?
How, accuse the Dispensation,
Which allows them all, to *Love*?

Love like Air is freely given;
Pow'r nor Chance can these restrain;
Common Gifts of bounteous Heaven,
Only *purest* on the Plain!

Courts cou'd ne'er ye Charms discover,
All in Stars & Garters drest;
As, on Sundays, does the Lover,
With his Posie on his Breast.

Pinks & Roses in profusion!
Said to *fade* when *Cloë's* near!
Fops might use the same Allusion,
But the Shepherd is sincere.

Collin's utmost Bliss is bounded,
While the Crook his Hand adorns;
Better *That* with Flow'rs surrounded,
Than ye Sceptre rough with Thorns.

Better far the rushy Bonnet
Than a Crown, well understood;
While perhaps there blushes on it
Some unhappy Rival's Blood!

Hark to yonder Milkmaid singing
Chearly o'er the brimming Pail!
Cowslips all around her springing,
shining
Sweetly paint the charming Vale.

Never yet did courtly Maiden
Look so sprightly, look so fair;
Or her Breast, with Jewells laden,
Pour a Song so void of Care.

Wou'd indulgent Heav'n had granted
Me, some rural Damsel's Part!
All the Empire I had wanted
Then had been my Shepherd's Heart.

Then, with Him, o'er Hills & Mountains,
Free from Censure, might I rove;
Fearless taste the crystal Fountains,
Peacefull sleep beneathe ye Grove.

Ever gentle, still forgiving,
Partial to my virgin Bloom,
None had censur'd me, when living;
None had flatter'd, on my Tomb.

To some Village they had bore me,
Wept by Lover's tears alone;
Strephon hung ye Garland oer me,
Strephon had inscrib'd ye Stone.

Poems from the Manuscript that Vary Greatly from Their Published Forms

The Shepherd's Garland,
consisting of Four new Ballads in ye Pastoral
Style written after Leaving Chelt'nam MDCCXLIII
& sacred To the Youth, Beauty, & Manner of . .
Simplici *Myrto* nihil allabores
Sedulus curo. HOR.

[Then follows *Absence.*]

Hope

Hic gelidi Fontes, hic mollia Prata, Lycori;
Hic Nemus, hic toto tecum consumerer Ovo.

My Banks they are furnish'd wth Bees,
Whose murmur invites one to sleep;
My Grottos are shaded with Trees,
And my Hills are *white-over* wth Sheep.

I seldom have met wth a Loss;
Such Health do my Fountains bestow!
My Fountains, all border'd wth Moss,
Where the Pinks & the Violets grow!

I have found out a Gift for my Fair;
I have found where ye wood-pigeons breed;
Yet let me that Plunder forbear;
She will say 'twas a barbarous Deed.

For *he* ne'er cou'd be true, she aver'd
Who cou'd rob a poor Bird of its Young;
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
Such Tenderness fall from her Tongue.

I have heard her with sweetness unfold
How that Pity was due to a Dove!
That it ever attended the bold,
And She call'd it "the Sister of Love."

But her *Words* such a Pleasure convey,
So much I her *Accents* adore,
Whatever, whatever she say,
Methinks I shou'd love her ye more.

One wou'd think she might like to retire
To the Grove I have labour'd to rear;
Not a Shrub that I heard her admire,
But it grows & it flourishes there.

O how sudden the Sweet-briar strove,
And the Myrtle, to render it gay!
The willow, so hatefull to Love.
The Willow alone is away.

Were I sure that *Arabia* cou'd boast
A Flow'r or a Shrub, to her Mind,
I wou'd sail to ye far'distant Coast,
It's favourite Blossom to find.

With zeal shou'd thy Lover depart,
And meet ye rude Seas w.^rh^ a Smile;
And all that wou'd go to my Heart,
Were to leave my dear *Phillis* ye while.

The Linnets all flock to my Groves;
Where
The Limes their rich Fragrance bestow;
And the Nightingales warble their Loves
From Thickets of Roses, that blow.

And when her bright Form shall appear,
Each Bird shall harmoniously join,
In a concert, so *sweet* & so clear,
As she *may* not be fond to *resign.*

Not a Pine in my *Copse* is there seen,
But with tendrils of Wood-bine 'tis bound;
Not a Linden's more beautiful Green,
But a Jessamin twines it around.

Dear Regions of Silence & Shade!
Soft scenes of Contentment & Ease!
Where *I* cou'd have *pleasingly* stray'd,
If ought, in *her Absence*, cou'd please.

But where does my *Phillida* stray?
And where are *her* Grotts & her Bow'rs?
Are her Groves & her Valleys as gay?
And the Shepherds as gentle, as ours?

The Groves may perhaps be as fair,
And the Face of the Valleys as fine;
The Swain's gentle Manners compare,
But their *Love* is not equal to Mine.

SOLLICITUDE.

—Tenui pendentia Filo

Why will you my Passion reprove?
Why term it a Folly to grieve?
E'er I *shew* you the Charms of my Love,
She is fairer y^{n} you can believe.

With her *Charms* she enamours y^{e} *brave*;
With her *Wit* she engages the *Free;*
With her *Modesty* pleases the *Grave*;
—She is *ev'ry* way pleasing to *me.*

I can see how she charms ye rude Hind;
How his Gestures are alter'd by Love;
My Senses are false, or I find
Both his Voice & his Language improve.

I can see where my Charmer goes by,
How ye Hermit peeps out of his Cell;
How he thinks of his Youth wth a Sigh,
How fondly he wishes her well.

Come hither, ye Youths of the Plain!
Why slight ye my amorous Lays?
I cou'd lay down my Life for ye Swain,
That will speak in my Phyllis's Praise.

When *He* sings, may ye Nymphs of ye town
Come flocking & listen ye while;
Nay on *Him* let not Phillida frown—
But I *cannot* allow her to smile.

For when *Paridel* tries, in ye Dance,
Any Favour with Phyllis to find,
O then, with one trivial Glance,
She might ruin ye Peace of my Mind!

For *Paridel* artfully tells
A soothing fantastical Tale;
And shews her wherein she excells
The Lilly, that graces the Vale.

Away to the Garden he hies,
And pillages every sweet;
And, tracing their several Dyes,
He lays them at Phyllis's Feet.

O Phyllis, he whispers, more fair,
More sweet than ye Orange in Flow'r!
Can the Pink in a Morning compare?
Or ye Tuberose after a Show'r?

I steal from no Flow'rets y^{t} blow
To paint forth *her* Pow'r, I approve;
For what can a Blossom bestow
So dear so delightfull as Love?

I sing in a rustical Way;
A Shepherd, & one of the Throng;
But *Phyllis* is pleas'd wth my Lay,
Go, Poets! & envy my Song.

W. G.†

FABLE

Tis y^{e} *same* Cupid wakes ye Lyre
That deals his amorous Darts around;
From *Love* we catch poetick Fire,
And Echo learns her sweetest sound.

As *Cupid* near ye Muses' Glade
In slumber's soft embraces lay,
A petulant exulting Maid
Approaching, stole his Darts away.

Henceforth, she said, depriv'd of Pow'r
Let Cupids Insolence decrease;
And, from this blest, this happy Hour,
Let us, poor Maidens! live in Peace.

Sleep on, poor Child! whilst I withdraw,
And this thy vile Artill'ry hide;
At length ye Muse's Fount she saw,
And plung'd 'em in ye crystal Tide—

But will those streams, so lovely clear,
Escape ye Whipster searching round?
Will not ye glitt'ring Points appear?
Will not ye furtive spoil be found?

S.

† This signature is puzzling.

Too soon it was; & ev'ry Dart,
Ting'd in ye Muse's lucid spring,
Acquir'd new Pow'r to touch ye Heart
And taught, at once, to *love* & *sing*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Poems

Written on my Study-window.
Published, The Scholar's Relapse.
Daphne's Visit.
The Rose-bud.
The Lark.
Published, The Sky-lark.
The Landskip.
To The Hon. Mrs. Knight, at the time she erected her Library.
Published, To a Lady of Quality fitting up her Library, 1738.
Song.
Ode.
Published, Ode to a Young Lady somewhat too solicitous about her manner of expression.
Imitated from Boileau, "Voici les lieux, etc."
Published, Imitated from the French.
In Winter, 1746.
To Miss . . . not dancing at a Ball.
Alluding to a Rural Custom on Valentine's Day.
Published, Valentine's Day.
Urit spes animi credula mutui.
Published, Ode. Written 1739.
Urit spes animi credula mutui. Hor.
For Valentine's Day.
For a Beech.
The King-fisher.
Published, The Halcyon.
Sonnet.
Song.
To the Honourable Mrs. Knight, at the time she was laying out her Villa.
The Sanctuary.
Queen Elizabeth, a Ballad.
Published, The Princess Elizabeth.
The Author Indisposed.
Published, Song V.
Verses left at The Right Honorable the Lady Luxborough's.
Winter, 1747.
Published, Upon a visit to the same in Winter 1748.
Here Luxborough sat.
On a Lady's refusing to be seen the day before she was to leave a Public Place.

Published, Song X, 1743.
James Dawson's Garland.
Published, Jemmy Dawson.
The Roses Reconciled.
Mr. Shenstone to Mr. Whistler.
The Evergreen.
A Ballad.
Published, Nancy of the Vale.
Inscription for a medicinal fountain in my Farm.
On the Discovery of the Chelt'nam Waters by Pigeons.
The Kid.
Published, The Dying Kid.
An Inscription in the Old English Guise and Characters and Spelling; to be found in my Gothic Building.
Published in Dodsley's Description of the Leasowes (*Works*, II).
An Inscription in my Grove; or Fairy-Spell.
Published in Dodsley's Description of the Leasowes.
Adieu! ye jovial youths.
Published, Song XVII. Written in a Collection of Bacchanalian Songs.
Lysander to Chloe.
Sonnet.
Published, Song III.
The Shepherd's Garland.
Published, A Pastoral Ballad.
Ode.
Fable.
Published, Anacreontic, 1738.
The Amorous Inconstant.
Song.
Ode to Memory.
Written in Autumn, 1748.
Published, Verses written towards the close of the year 1748, to William Lyttleton, Esq.
Verses on a Seat in my Grove.
Published in Dodsley's Description of the Leasowes.
Then take a nymph.

LATIN INSCRIPTIONS

In Memoriam Flirtilla.
To Eutrecia Smith.
Published, To Maria Dolman.
To James Thomson.
O Viator!
To M. A.
On a Mausoleum.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Seventeen paintings, of which seven are full-page landscapes.
Two pencil sketches.

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Mr. Hutton of Oxford wrote in his *Burford Papers* in 1905 that this book by Graves was rare. I tried several of the largest libraries in this country and could not find it. A letter from one of the officials of the New York Public Library stated, however, that they had on their shelves

"Seward; William, Recollections of some particulars in the life of Wm. Shenstone in a series of letters . . . [anon]. London, 1788. 12 mo."

By personal investigation I found that this was the volume I desired. The name of the author does not appear on the title-page. Some hand had inserted, with pen and ink, the name of Seward as the person to whom the letters were written, and the book was catalogued as by him. It is plainly the book by Graves, as is shown by paragraphs in it, which Anderson quotes at length as by Graves, and by the statement of the author on page 133, made in connection with Shenstone's letters, that his accounts of the people of rank who visited him were written only to two of his most intimate friends—"either to me or to Mr. Jago." Now nearly all the letters in the only volume of them published at that time were either to Mr. Graves or to Mr. Jago. My information on this point was welcomed by the New York librarian, and the book is now probably catalogued correctly.

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Dear Prof Kittredge

A few years ago a Wellesley girl, going in for her Master's Degree, asked permission to edit a Ms. of mine. I gladly allowed it & she produced this remarkable study. The English Department published it & have sent me copies for distribution